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BY
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JAMES BRYCE
AUTHOR OF 'THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE'
M.P. FOR ABERDEEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

THE PARTY SYSTEM—PUBLIC OPINION—ILLUSTRATIONS AND REFLECTIONS—SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

SECOND EDITION REVISED
(41st Thousand)

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PART III

THE PARTY SYSTEM

CHAPTER LIII

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR HISTORY

IN the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to describe the legal framework of American government as it exists both in the nation and in the States. Beginning from the Federal and State Constitutions we have seen what sort of a structure has been erected upon them as a foundation, what methods of legislation and administration have been developed, what results these methods have produced. It is only occasionally and incidentally that we have had to consider the influence upon political bodies and methods of those extra-legal groupings of men which we call political parties. But the spirit and force of party has in America been as essential to the action of the machinery of government as steam is to a locomotive engine; or, to vary the simile, party association and organization are to the organs of government almost what the motor nerves are to the muscles, sinews, and bones of the human body. They transmit the motive power, they determine the directions in which the organs act. A description of them is therefore a necessary complement to an account of the Constitution and government; for it is into the hands of the parties that the working of the government has fallen. Their ingenuity, stimulated by incessant rivalry, has turned many provisions of the Constitution to unforeseen uses, and given to the legal institutions of the country no small part of their present colour.

To describe the party system is, however, much harder than it has been to describe those legal institutions. Hitherto we have been on comparatively firm ground, for we have had definite data to rely upon, and the facts set forth have been mostly patent facts which can be established from books and documents. But now we come to phenomena for a knowledge of which one must trust to a variety of flying and floating sources, to newspaper paragraphs, to the conversation of American acquaintances, to impressions formed on the spot from seeing incidents and hearing stories and anecdotes, the authority for which, though it seemed sufficient at the time, cannot always be remembered. Nor have I the advantage of being able to cite any previous treatise on the subject; for though the books and articles dealing with the public life of the United States may be counted by hundreds, I know of no author who has set himself to describe impartially the actual daily working of that part of the vast and intricate political machine which lies outside the Constitution, nor, what is more important still, the influences which sway the men by whom this machine has been constructed and is daily manipulated. The task, however, cannot be declined; for it is that very part of my undertaking which, even though imperfectly performed, may be most serviceable to the student of modern politics. A philosopher in Germany, who had mastered all the treatises on the British Constitution, perused every statute of recent years, and even followed through the newspapers the debates in Parliament, would know far less about the government and politics of England than he might learn by spending a month there conversing with practical politicians, and watching the daily changes of sentiment during a parliamentary crisis or a general election.

So, too, in the United States, the actual working of party government is not only full of interest and instruction, but is so unlike what a student of the Federal Constitution could have expected or foreseen, that it is the thing of all others which any one writing about America ought to try to portray. In the knowledge of a stranger there must, of course, be serious gaps. I am sensible of the gaps in my own. But since no native American has yet essayed the task of describing the party system of his country, it is better that a stranger should address himself to it, than that the inquiring European should have no means of satisfying his curiosity. And a native American writer, even if he steered clear of partisanship, which I think he might, for in no country does one find a larger number of philosophically judicial observers of politics, would suffer from his own familiarity with many of those very things which a stranger finds perplexing. Describe English politics to an intelligent foreigner and you will find his questions directed to the points which you have passed over, because obvious to yourself, while they may probably suggest to you new aspects which it has never occurred to you to consider. Thus European and perhaps even American readers may find in the sort of perspective which a stranger gets of transatlantic phenomena some compensation for his necessarily inferior knowledge of details.

In America the great moving forces are the parties. The government counts for less than in Europe, the parties count for more; and the fewer have become their principles and the fainter their interest in those principles, the more perfect has become their organization. The less of nature the more of art; the less spontaneity the more mechanism. But before I attempt to describe this organization, something must be said of the doctrines which the parties respectively profess, and the explanation of the doctrines involves a few preliminary words upon the history of party in America.

Although the early colonists carried with them across the sea some of the habits of English political life, and others may have been subsequently imitated from the old country, the parties of the United States are pure home growths, developed by the circumstances of the nation. The English reader who attempts, as Englishmen are apt to do, to identify the great American parties with his own familiar Whigs and Tories, or even to discover a general similarity between them, had better give up the attempt, for it will lead him hopelessly astray. Here and there we find points of analogy rather than of resemblance, but the moment we try to follow out the analogy it breaks down, so different are the issues on which English and American politics have turned.

In the United States, the history of party begins with the Constitutional Convention of 1787 at Philadelphia. In its debates and discussions on the drafting of the Constitution there were revealed two opposite tendencies, which soon afterwards appeared on a larger scale in the State Conventions, to which the new instrument was submitted for acceptance. These were the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies—a tendency to maintain both the freedom of the individual citizen and the independence in legislation, in administration, in jurisdiction, indeed in everything except foreign policy and national defence, of the several States; an opposite tendency to subordinate the States to the nation and vest large powers in the central Federal authority.

The charge against the Constitution that it endangered State rights evoked so much alarm that some States were induced to ratify only by the promise that certain amendments should be added, which were accordingly accepted in the course of the next three years. When the machinery had been set in motion by the choice of George Washington as president, and with him of a Senate and a House of Representatives, the tendencies which had opposed or supported the adoption of the Constitution reappeared not only in Congress but in the President's cabinet, where Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, counselled a line of action which assumed and required the exercise of large powers by the Federal government, while Jefferson, the secretary of state, desired to practically restrict its action to foreign affairs. The advocates of a central national authority had begun to receive the name of Federalists, and to act pretty constantly together, when an event happened which, while it tightened their union, finally consolidated their opponents also into a party. This was the creation of the French Republic and its declaration of war against England. The Federalists, who were shocked by the excesses of the Terror of 1793, counselled neutrality, and were more than ever inclined to value the principle of authority, and to allow the Federal power a wide sphere of action. The party of Jefferson, who had now retired from the administration, were pervaded by sympathy with French ideas, were hostile to England whose attitude continued to be discourteous, and sought to restrict the interference of the central government with the States, and to allow the fullest play to the sentiment of State independence, of local independence, of personal independence. This party took the name of Republicans or Democratic Republicans, and they are the predecessors of the present Democrats. Both parties were, of course, attached to republican government—that is to say, were alike hostile to a monarchy. But the Jeffersonians had more faith in the masses and in leaving things alone, together with less respect for authority, so that in a sort of general way one may say that while one party claimed to be the apostles of Liberty, the other represented the principle of Order.

These tendencies found occasions for combating one another, not only in foreign policy and in current legislation, but also in the construction and application of the Constitution. Like all documents, and especially documents which have been formed by a series of compromises between opposite views, it was and is susceptible of various interpretations, which the acuteness of both sets of partisans was busy in discovering and expounding. While the piercing intellect of Hamilton developed all those of its provisions which invested the Federal Congress and President with far-reaching powers, and sought to build up a system of institutions which should give to these provisions their full effect, Jefferson and his coadjutors appealed to the sentiment of individualism, strong in the masses of the people, and, without venturing to propose alterations in the text of the Constitution, protested against all extensions of its letter, and against all the assumptions of Federal authority which such extensions could be made to justify. Thus two parties grew up with tenets, leaders, impulses, sympathies, and hatreds, hatreds which soon became so bitter as not to spare the noble and dignified figure of Washington himself, whom the angry Republicans assailed with invectives the more unbecoming because his official position forbade him to reply.[1]

At first the Federalists had the best of it, for the reaction against the weakness of the old Confederation which the Union had superseded disposed sensible men to tolerate a strong central power. The President, though not a member of either party, was, by force of circumstances, as well as owing to the influence of Hamilton, practically with the Federalists. But during the presidency of John Adams, who succeeded Washington, they committed grave errors. When the presidential election of 1800 arrived, it was seen that the logical and oratorical force of Hamilton's appeals to the reason of the nation told far less than the skill and energy with which Jefferson played on their feelings and prejudices. The Republicans triumphed in the choice of their chief, who retained power for eight years (he was re-elected in 1804), to be peaceably succeeded by his friend Madison for another eight years (elected in 1808, re-elected in 1812), and his disciple Monroe for eight years more (elected in 1816, re-elected in 1820). Their long-continued tenure of office was due not so much to their own merits, for neither Jefferson nor Madison conducted foreign affairs with success, as to the collapse of their antagonists. The Federalists never recovered from the blow given in the election of 1800. They lost Hamilton by death in 1803. No other leader of equal gifts appeared, and the party, which had shown little judgment in the critical years

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[1] In mockery of the title he had won from public gratitude a few years before, he was commonly called by them "The stepfather of his country."

1810-14, finally disappears from sight after the second peace with England in 1815.

One cannot note the disappearance of this brilliant figure, to Europeans the most interesting in the earlier history of the Republic, without the remark that his countrymen seem to have never, either in his lifetime or afterwards, duly recognized his splendid gifts. Washington is, indeed, a far more perfect character. Washington stands alone and unapproachable, like a snow-peak rising above its fellows into the clear air of morning, with a dignity, constancy, and purity which have made him the ideal type of civic virtue to succeeding generations. No greater benefit could have befallen the republic than to have such a type set from the first before the eye and mind of the people. But Hamilton, of a virtue not so flawless, touches us more nearly, not only by the romance of his early life and his tragic death, but by a certain ardour and impulsiveness, and even tenderness of soul, joined to a courage equal to that of Washington himself. Equally apt for war and for civil government, with a profundity and amplitude of view rare in practical soldiers or statesmen, he stands in the front rank of a generation never surpassed in history, a generation which includes Burke and Fox and Pitt and Grattan, Stein and Hardenberg and William von Humboldt, Wellington and Napoleon. Talleyrand, who seems to have felt for him something as near affection as that cold heart could feel, said, after knowing all the famous men of the time, that only Fox and Napoleon were Hamilton's equals, and that he had divined Europe, having never seen it.

This period (1788-1824) may be said to constitute the first act in the drama of American party history. The people, accustomed hitherto to care only for their several commonwealths, learn to value and to work their new national institutions. They become familiar with the Constitution itself, as partners get to know, when disputes arise among them, the provisions of the partnership deed under which their business has to be carried on. It is found that the existence of a central Federal power does not annihilate the States, so the apprehensions on that score are allayed. It is also discovered that there are unforeseen directions, such for instance as banking and currency, through which the Federal power can strengthen its hold on the nation. Differences of view and feeling give rise to parties, yet parties are formed by no means solely on the basis of general principles.

but owe much to the influence of prominent personalities, of transient issues, of local interests or prejudices. The small farmers and the Southern men generally follow the Republican standard borne aloft by the great State of Virginia, while the strength of the Federalists lies in New England and the middle States, led sometimes by Massachusetts, sometimes by Pennsylvania. The commercial interest was with the Federalists, and the staid solid Puritanism of all classes, headed by the clergy. Some one indeed has described the struggle from 1796 to 1808 as one between Jefferson, who was an avowed free-thinker, and the New England ministers, and no doubt the ministers of religion did in the Puritan States exert a political influence approaching that of the Presbyterian clergy in Scotland during the seventeenth century. Jefferson's importance lies in the fact that he became the representative not merely of democracy, but of local democracy, of the notion that government is hardly wanted at all, that the people are sure to go right if they are left alone, that he who resists authority is *prima facie* justified in doing so, because authority is *prima facie* tyrannical, that a country where each local body in its own local area looks after the objects of common concern, raising and administering any such funds as are needed, and is interfered with as little as possible by any external power, comes nearest to the ideal of a truly free people. Some intervention on the part of the State there must be, for the State makes the law and appoints the judges of appeal; but the less one has to do with the State, and *a fortiori* the less one has to do with the less popular and more encroaching Federal authority, so much the better Jefferson impressed this view on his countrymen with so much force and such personal faith that he became a sort of patron saint of freedom in the eyes of the next generation, who used to name their children after him,[1] and to give dinners and deliver high-flown speeches on his birthday, a festival only second in importance to the immortal Fourth of July. He had borrowed from the Revolutionists of France even their theatrical ostentation of simplicity. He rejected the ceremonial with which Washington had sustained the chief magistracy of the nation declaring that to him there was no majesty but that of the people.

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[1] It is related of a New England clergyman that when, being about to baptize a child, he asked the father the child's name, and the father replied, "Thomas Jefferson," he answered in a loud voice, "No such unchristian name: John Adams, I baptize thee," with the other sacramental words of the rite.

As New England was, by its system of local self-government through the town meeting, as well as by the absence of slavery, in some respects the most democratic part of the United States, it may seem surprising that it should have been a stronghold of the Federalists. The reason is to be found partly in its Puritanism, which revolted at the deism or atheism of the French revolutionists, partly in the interests of its shipowners and merchants, who desired above all things a central government which, while strong enough to make and carry out treaties with England and so secure the development of American commerce, should be able also to reform the currency of the country and institute a national banking system. Industrial as well as territorial interests were already beginning to influence politics. That the mercantile and manufacturing classes, with all the advantages given them by their wealth, their intelligence, and their habits of co-operation, should have been vanquished by the agricultural masses, may be ascribed partly to the fact that the democratic impulse of the War of Independence was strong among the citizens who had grown to manhood between 1780 and 1800, partly to the tactical errors of the Federalist leaders, but largely also to the skill which Jefferson showed in organizing the hitherto undisciplined battalions of Republican voters. Thus early in American history was the secret revealed, which Europe is only now discovering, that in free countries with an extended suffrage, numbers without organization are helpless and with it omnipotent.

I have ventured to dwell on this first period, because being the first it shows the origin of tendencies which were to govern the subsequent course of party strife. But as I am not writing a history of the United States I pass by the particular issues over which the two parties wrangled, most of them long since extinct. One remark is however needed as to the view which each took of the Constitution. Although the Federalists were in general the advocates of a loose and liberal construction of the fundamental instrument, because such a construction opened a wider sphere to Federal power, they were ready, whenever their local interests stood in the way, to resist Congress and the executive, alleging that the latter were overstepping their jurisdiction. In 1814 several of the New England States, where the opposition to the war then being waged with England was strongest, sent delegates to a convention at Hartford, which, while discussing the best means for putting an end to the war and restricting the powers of Congress in commercial legislation, was suspected of meditating a secession of the trading States from the Union. On the other hand, the Republicans did not hesitate to stretch to their utmost, when they were themselves in power, all the authority which the Constitution could be construed to allow to the executive and the Federal government generally. The boldest step which a president has ever taken, the purchase from Napoleon of the vast territories of France west of the Mississippi which went by the name of Louisiana, was taken by Jefferson without the authority of Congress. Congress subsequently gave its sanction. But Jefferson and many of his friends held that under the Constitution even Congress had not the power to acquire new territories to be formed into States. They were therefore in the dilemma of either violating the Constitution or losing a golden opportunity of securing the Republic against the growth on its western frontier of a powerful and possibly hostile foreign state. Some of them tried to refute their former arguments against a lax construction of the Constitution, but many others avowed the dangerous doctrine that if Louisiana could be brought in only by breaking down the walls of the Constitution, broken they must be.[1]

The disappearance of the Federal party between 1815 and 1820 left the Republicans masters of the field. But in the United States if old parties vanish nature produces new ones. Sectional divisions soon arose among the men who joined in electing Monroe in 1820, and under the influence of the personal hostility of Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson (chosen President in 1828), two great parties were again formed (about 1830) which some few years later absorbed the minor groups. One of these two parties carried on, under the name of Democrats, the dogmas and traditions of the Jeffersonian Republicans. It was the defender of States' Rights and of a restrictive construction of the Constitution; it leant mainly on the South and the farming classes generally, and it was therefore inclined to free trade. The other section, which called itself at first the National Republican, ultimately the Whig party, represented many of the views of the former Federalists, such as their advocacy of a tariff for the protection of manufactures, and of the expenditure of public money on internal improvements. It was willing to increase the army and navy, and like the Federalists found its chief, though by no means its sole, support in the commercial and manufacturing parts of the country, that is to say, in New England and the middle States. Meantime a new question far more exciting, far more menacing, had arisen. In 1819, when Missouri applied to be admitted into the Union as a State, a sharp contest broke out in Congress as to whether slavery should be permitted within her limits, nearly all the Northern members voting against slavery, nearly all the Southern members for. The struggle might have threatened the stability of the Union but for the compromise adopted next year, which, while admitting slavery in Missouri, forbade it for the future north of lat. 36° 30′. The danger seemed to have passed, but in its very suddenness there had been something terrible. Jefferson, then over seventy, said that it startled him "like a fire-bell in the night." After 1840 things grew more serious, for whereas up till that time new States had been admitted substantially in pairs, a slave State balancing a free State, it began to be clear that this must shortly cease, since the remaining territory out of which new States would be formed lay north of the line 36° 30′. As every State held two seats in the Senate, the then existing balance in that chamber between slave States and free States would evidently soon be overset by the admission of a larger number of the latter. The apprehension of this event, with its probable result of legislation unfriendly to slavery, stimulated the South to the annexation of Texas, and made them increasingly sensitive to the growth, slow as that growth was, of Abolitionist opinions at the North. The question of the extension of slavery west of the Missouri river had become by 1850 the vital and absorbing question for the people of the United States, and as in that year California, having organized herself without slavery, was knocking at the doors of Congress for admission as a State, it had become an urgent question which evoked the hottest passions, and the victors in which would be victors all along the line. But neither of the two great parties ventured to commit itself either way. The Southern Democrats hesitated to break with those Democrats of the Northern States who sought to restrict slavery. The Whigs of the North, fearing to alienate the South by any decided action against the growing pretensions of the slave-holders, temporized and suggested compromises which practically served the cause of slavery. They did not perceive that in trying to preserve their party they were losing hold of the people, alienating from themselves the men who cared for principle in politics, sinking into a mere organization without a faith worth fighting for. That this was so presently appeared. The Democratic party had by 1852 passed almost completely under the control of the slave-holders, and was adopting the dogma that Congress enjoyed under the Constitution no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. This dogma obviously overthrew as unconstitutional the Missouri compromise of 1820. The Whig leaders discredited themselves by Henry Clay's compromise scheme of 1850, which, while admitting California as a free State, appeased the South by the Fugitive Slave Law. They received a crushing defeat at the presidential election of 1852; and what remained of their party finally broke in pieces in 1854 over the bill for organizing Kansas as a territory in which the question of slaves or no slaves should be left to the people, a bill which of course repealed the Missouri compromise. Singularly enough, the two great orators of the party, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, both died in 1852, wearied with strife and disappointed in their ambition of reaching the presidential chair. Together with Calhoun, who passed away two years earlier, they are the ornaments of this generation, not indeed rising to the stature of Washington or Hamilton, but more remarkable than any, save one, among the statesmen who have followed them.[1] With them ends the second period in the annals of American parties, which, extending from about 1820 to 1856, includes the rise and fall of the Whig party. Most of the controversies which filled it have become matter for history only. But three large results, besides the general democratization of politics, stand out. One is the detachment of the United States from the affairs of the Old World. Another is the growth of a sense of national life, especially in the Northern and Western States, along with the growth at the same time of a secessionist spirit among the slave-holders. And the third is the development of the complex machinery of party organization, with the adoption of the principle on which that machinery so largely rests, that public office is to be enjoyed only by the adherents of the President for the time being.

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[1] The best authorities now hold that the Constitution did really permit the Federal government to acquire the new territory, and Congress to form States out of it. —See the interesting pamphlet of Judge Thomas M. Cooley, *The Purchase of Louisiana*, Indianapolis, 1886. Many of the Federalist leaders warmly opposed the purchase, but the far-seeing patriotism of Hamilton defended it.

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[1] Powerful pictures of the political struggles of this time may be found in Mr Schurz's *Life of Henry Clay*, and Dr. von Holst's *Life of John C. Calhoun*.

The Whig party having vanished, the Democrats seemed to be for the moment, as they had been once before, left in possession of the field. But this time a new antagonist was quick to appear. The growing boldness of the slave-owners had begun to alarm the Northern people when they were startled by the decision of the Supreme court, pronounced in the case of the slave Dred Scott, which laid down the doctrine that Congress had no power to forbid slavery anywhere, and that a slave-holder might carry his slaves with him where he pleased, seeing that they were mere objects of property, whose possession the Constitution guaranteed.[1] This hastened the formation out of the wrecks of the Whigs of a new party, which took in 1856 the name of Republican, while at the same time it threw an apple of discord among the Democrats. In 1860 the latter could not agree upon a candidate for President. The Southern wing pledged themselves to one man, the Northern wing to another; a body of hesitating and semi-detached politicians put forward a third. Thus the Republicans through the divisions of their opponents triumphed in the election of Abraham Lincoln, presently followed by the secession of eleven slave States.

The Republican party, which had started by denouncing the Dred Scott decision and proclaiming the right of Congress to restrict slavery, was of course throughout the Civil War the defender of the Union and the assertor of Federal authority, stretched, as was unavoidable, to lengths previously unheard of. When the war was over, there came the difficult task of reconstructing the now reconquered slave States, and of securing the position in them of the lately liberated negroes. The outrages perpetrated on the latter, and on white settlers in some parts of the South, required further exertions of Federal authority, and made the question of the limit of that authority still a practical one, for the old Democratic party, almost silenced during the war, had now reappeared in full force as the advocate of State rights, and the watchful critic of any undue stretches of Federal authority. It was found necessary to negative the Dred Scott decision and set at rest all questions relating to slavery and to the political equality of the races by the adoption of three important amendments to the Constitution. The troubles of the South by degrees settled down as the whites regained possession of the State governments and the Northern troops were withdrawn. In the presidential election of 1876 the war question and negro question had become dead issues, for it was plain that a large and increasing number of the voters were no longer, despite the appeals of the Republican leaders, seriously concerned about them.

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[1] This broad doctrine was not necessary for the decision of the case, but delivered as an *obiter dictum* by the majority of the court.

This election marks the close of the third period, which embraces the rise and overwhelming predominance of the Republican party. Formed to resist the extension of slavery, led on to destroy it, compelled by circumstances to expand the central authority in a way unthought of before, that party had now worked out its programme and fulfilled its original mission. The old aims were accomplished, but new ones had not yet been substituted, for though new problems had appeared, the party was not prepared with solutions. Similarly the Democratic party had discharged its mission in defending the rights of the reconstructed States, and criticizing excesses of executive power; similarly it too had refused to grapple either with the fresh questions which had begun to arise since the war, or with those older questions which had now reappeared above the subsiding flood of war days. The old parties still stood as organizations, and still claimed to be the exponents of principles. Their respective principles had, however, little direct application to the questions which confronted and divided the nation. A new era was opening which called either for the evolution of new parties, or for the transformation of the old ones by the adoption of tenets and the advocacy of views suited to the needs of the time. But this fourth period, which began with 1876, has not yet seen such a transformation, and we shall therefore find, when we come to examine the existing state of parties, that there is an unreality and lack of vital force in both Republicans and Democrats, powerful as their organizations are.

The foregoing sketch, given only for the sake of explaining the present condition of parties, suggests some observations on the foundations of party in America.

If we look over Europe we shall find that the grounds on which parties have been built and contests waged since the beginning of free governments have been in substance but few. In the hostility of rich and poor, or of capital and labour, in the fears of the Haves and the desires of the Have-nots, we perceive the most frequent ground, though it is often disguised as a dispute about the extension of the suffrage or some other civic right. Questions relating to the tenure of land have played a large part; so have questions of religion; so too have animosities or jealousies of race; and of course the form of government, whether it shall be a monarchy or a republic, has sometimes been in dispute. None of these grounds of quarrel substantially affected American parties during the three periods we have been examining. No one has ever advocated monarchy, or a restricted suffrage, or a unified instead of a Federal republic. Nor down to 1876 was there ever any party which could promise more to the poor than its opponents. In 1852 the Know-nothing party came forward as the organ of native American opinion against recent immigrants, then chiefly the Irish, for German immigration was comparatively small in those days. But as this party failed to face the problem of slavery, and roused jealousy by its secret organization, it soon passed away. The complete equality of all sects, with the complete neutrality of the government in religious matters, has fortunately kept religious passion outside the sphere of politics.

Have the American parties then been formed only upon narrow and local bases, have they contended for transient objects, and can no deeper historical meaning, no longer historical continuity, be claimed for them?

Two permanent oppositions may, I think, be discerned running through the history of the parties, sometimes openly recognized, sometimes concealed by the urgency of a transitory question. One of these is the opposition between a centralized or unified and a federalized government. In every country there are centrifugal and centripetal forces at work, the one or the other of which is for the moment the stronger. There has seldom been a country in which something might not have been gained, in the way of good administration and defensive strength, by a greater concentration of power in the hands of the central government, enabling it to do things which local bodies, or a more restricted central government, could not do equally cheaply or well. Against this gain there is always to be set the danger that such concentration may weaken the vitality of local communities and authorities, and may enable the central power to stunt their development. Sometimes needs of the former kind are more urgent, or the sentiment of the people tends to magnify them; sometimes again the centrifugal forces obtain the upper hand. English history shows several such alternations. But in America the Federal form of government has made this permanent and natural opposition specially conspicuous. The salient feature of the Constitution is the effort it makes to establish an equipoise between the force which would carry the planet States off into space and the force which would draw them into the sun of the National government. There have always therefore been minds inclined to take sides upon this fundamental question, and a party has always had something definite and weighty to appeal to when it claims to represent either the autonomy of communities on the one hand, or the majesty and beneficent activity of the National government on the other. The former has been the watchword of the Democratic party. The latter was seldom distinctly avowed, but was generally in fact represented by the Federalists of the first period, the Whigs of the second, the Republicans of the third.

The other opposition, though it goes deeper and is more pervasive, has been less clearly marked in America, and less consciously admitted by the Americans themselves. It is the opposition between the tendency which makes some men prize the freedom of the individual as the first of social goods, and that which disposes others to insist on checking and regulating his impulses. The opposition of these two tendencies, the love of liberty and the love of order, is permanent and necessary, because it springs from differences in the intellect and feelings of men which one finds in all countries and at all epochs. There are always persons who are struck by the weakness of mankind, by their folly, their passion, their selfishness: and these persons, distrusting the action of average mankind, will always wish to see them guided by wise heads and restrained by strong hands. Such guidance seems the best means of progress, such restraint the only means of security. Those on the other hand who think better of human nature, and have more hope in their own tempers, hold the impulses of the average man to be generally towards justice and peace. They have faith in the power of reason to conquer ignorance, and of generosity to overbear selfishness. They are therefore disposed to leave the individual alone, and to entrust the masses with power. Every sensible man feels in himself the struggle between these two tendencies, and is on his guard not to yield wholly to either, because the one degenerates into tyranny, the other into an anarchy out of which tyranny will eventually spring. The wisest statesman is he who best holds the balance between them.

Each of these tendencies found among the fathers of the American Republic a brilliant and characteristic representative. Hamilton, who had a low opinion of mankind, but a gift and a passion for large constructive statesmanship, went so far in his advocacy of a strong government as to be suspected of wishing to establish a monarchy after the British pattern. He has left on record his opinion that the free constitution of England, which he admired in spite of the faults he clearly saw, could not be worked without its corruptions.[1] Jefferson carried further than any other person set in an equally responsible place has ever done, his faith that government is either needless or an evil, and that with enough liberty, everything will go well. An insurrection every few years, he said, must be looked for, and even desired, to keep government in order. The Jeffersonian tendency has always remained, like a leaven, in the Democratic party, though in applying Jeffersonian doctrines the slave-holders stopped when they came to a black skin. Among the Federalists, and their successors the Whigs, and the more recent Republicans, there has never been wanting a full faith in the power of freedom. The Republicans gave a remarkable proof of it when they bestowed the suffrage on the negroes. Neither they nor any American party has ever professed itself the champion of authority and order; that would be a damaging profession. Nevertheless it is rather towards what I may perhaps venture to call the Federalist-Whig-Republican party than towards the Democrats that those who have valued the principle of authority have been generally drawn. It is for that party that the Puritan spirit, not extinct in America, has felt the greater affinity, for this spirit, having realized the sinfulness of human nature, is inclined to train and control the natural man by laws and force.

The tendency that makes for a strong government being akin to that which makes for a central government, the Federalist-Whig-Republican party, which has, through its long history, and under its varying forms and names, been the advocate of the national principle, found itself for this reason also led, more frequently than the Democrats, to exalt the rights and powers of government. It might be thought that the same cause would have made the Republican party take sides in that profound opposition which we perceive to-day in all civilized peoples, between the tendency to enlarge the sphere of legislation and State action, and the doctrine of *laissez faire.* So far, however, this has not happened. There is more in the character and temper of the Republicans than of the Democrats that leans towards State interference. But neither party has thought out the question; neither has shown any more definiteness of policy regarding it than the Tories and the Liberals have done in England.

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[1] David Hume had made the same remark, natural at a time when the power of Parliament was little checked by responsibility to the people.

American students of history may think that I have pressed the antithesis of liberty and authority, as well as that of centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, somewhat too far in making one party a representative of each through the first century of the Republic. I do not deny that at particular moments the party which was usually disposed towards a strong government resisted and decried authority, while the party which specially professed itself the advocate of liberty sought to make authority more stringent. Such deviations are however compatible with the general tendencies I have described. And no one who has gained even a slight knowledge of the history of the United States will fall into the error of supposing that order and authority mean there what they have meant in the monarchies of Continental Europe.

CHAPTER LIV

THE PARTIES OF TO-DAY

THERE are now two great and several minor parties in the United States. The great parties are the Republicans and the Democrats. What are their principles, their distinctive tenets, their tendencies? Which of them is for free trade, for civil service reform, for a spirited foreign policy, for the regulation of telegraphs by legislation, for a national bankrupt law, for changes in the currency, for any other of the twenty issues which one hears discussed in the country as seriously involving its welfare?

This is what a European is always asking of intelligent Republicans and intelligent Democrats. He is always asking because he never gets an answer. The replies leave him in deeper perplexity. After some months the truth begins to dawn upon him. Neither party has anything definite to say on these issues; neither party has any principles, any distinctive tenets. Both have traditions. Both claim to have tendencies. Both have certainly war cries, organizations, interests enlisted in their support. But those interests are in the main the interests of getting or keeping the patronage of the government. Tenets and policies, points of political doctrine and points of political practice, have all but vanished. They have not been thrown away but have been stripped away by Time and the progress of events, fulfilling some policies, blotting out others. All has been lost, except office or the hope of it.

The phenomenon may be illustrated from the case of England, where party government has existed longer and in a more fully developed form than in any other part of the Old World.[1] The essence of the English parties has lain in the existence of two sets of views and tendencies which divide the nation into two sections, the party, let us say, though these general terms are not very safe, of movement and the party of standing still, the party of liberty and the party of order. Each section believes in its own views, and is influenced by its peculiar tendencies, recollections, mental associations, to deal in its own peculiar way with every new question as it comes up. The particular dogmas may change: doctrines once held by Whigs alone may now be held by Tories also; doctrines which Whigs would have rejected fifty years ago may now be part of the orthodox programme of the Liberal party. But the tendencies have been permanent and have always so worked upon the various fresh questions and problems which have presented themselves during the last two centuries, that each party has had not only a brilliant concrete life in its famous leaders and zealous members, but also an intellectual and moral life in its principles. These principles have meant something to those who held them, so that when a fresh question arose it was usually possible to predict how each party, how even the average members of each party, would regard and wish to deal with it. Thus even when the leaders have been least worthy and their aims least pure, an English party has felt itself ennobled and inspirited by the sense that it had great objects to fight for, a history and traditions which imposed on it the duty of battling for its distinctive principles. It is because issues have never been lacking which brought these respective principles into operation, forcing the one party to maintain the cause of order and existing institutions, the other that of freedom and what was deemed progress, that the two English parties have not degenerated into mere factions. Their struggles for office have been redeemed from selfishness by the feeling that office was a means of giving practical effect to their doctrines.

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[1] English parties are however not very ancient; they date only from the struggle of the Stuart kings with the Puritan and popular party in the House of Commons, and did not take regular shape as Whigs and Tories till the reign of Charles II.

But suppose that in Britain all the questions which divide Tories from Liberals were to be suddenly settled and done with. Britain would be in a difficulty. Her free government has so long been worked by the action and reaction of the ministerialists and the opposition that there would probably continue to be two parties. But they would not be really, in the true old sense of the term, Tories and Liberals; they would be merely Ins and Outs. Their combats would be waged hardly even in name for principles, but only for place. The government of the country, with the honour, power, and emoluments attached to it, would still remain as a prize to be contended for. The followers would still rally to the leaders; and friendship would still bind the members together into organized bodies; while dislike and suspicion would still rouse them against their former adversaries. Thus not only the leaders, who would have something tangible to gain, but even others who had only their feelings to gratify, would continue to form political clubs, register voters, deliver party harangues, contest elections, just as they do now. The difference would be that each faction would no longer have broad principles—I will not say to invoke, for such principles would probably continue to be invoked as heretofore—but to insist on applying as distinctively its principles to the actual needs of the state. Hence quiet or fastidious men would not join in party struggles; while those who did join would no longer be stimulated by the sense that they were contending for something ideal. Loyalty to a leader whom it was sought to make prime minister would be a poor substitute for loyalty to a faith. If there were no conspicuous leader, attachment to the party would degenerate either into mere hatred of antagonists or into a struggle over places and salaries. And almost the same phenomena would be seen if, although the old issues had not been really determined, both the parties should have so far abandoned their former position that these issues did not divide them, but each professed principles which were, at least in their application, practicably undistinguishable.

This is what has happened with the American parties. The chief practical issues which once divided them have been settled. Some others have not been settled, but as regards these, one or other party has so departed from its former attitude that we cannot now speak of any conflict of principles.

When life leaves an organic body it becomes useless, fetid, pestiferous: it is fit to be cast out or buried from sight. What life is to an organism, principles are to a party. When they which are its soul have vanished, its body ought to dissolve, and the elements that formed it be regrouped in some new organism:

> 'The times have been
> That when the brains were out the man would die."

But a party does not always thus die. It may hold together long after its moral life is extinct. Guelfs and Ghibelines warred in Italy for nearly two centuries after the Emperor had ceased to threaten the Pope, or the Pope to befriend the cities of Lombardy. Parties go on contending because their members have formed habits of joint action, and have contracted hatreds and prejudices, and also because the leaders find their advantage in using these habits and playing on these prejudices. The American parties now continue to exist, because they have existed. The mill has been constructed, and its machinery goes on turning, even when there is no grist to grind. But this is not wholly the fault of the men; for the system of government requires and implies parties, just as that of England does. These systems are made to be worked, and always have been worked, by a majority; a majority must be cohesive, gathered into a united and organized body: such a body is a party.

If you ask an ordinary Northern Democrat to characterize the two parties, he will tell you that the Republicans are corrupt and incapable, and will cite instances in which persons prominent in that party, or intimate friends of its leaders, have been concerned in frauds on the government or in disgraceful lobbying transactions in Congress. When you press him for some distinctive principles separating his own party from theirs, he will probably say that the Democrats are the protectors of States' rights and of local independence, and the Republicans hostile to both. If you go on to inquire what bearing this doctrine of States' rights has on any presently debated issue he will admit that, for the moment, it has none, but will insist that should any issue involving the rights of the States arise, his party will be, as always, the guardian of American freedom.

This is really all that can be predicated about the Democratic party. If a question involving the rights of a State against the Federal authority were to emerge, its instinct would lead it to array itself on the side of the State rather than of the central government, supposing that it had no direct motive to do the opposite. As it has at no point of time, from the outbreak of the war down to 1888, possessed a majority in both Houses of Congress as well as the President in power, its devotion to this principle has not been tested, and might not resist the temptation of any interest the other way. However, this is matter of speculation, for at present the States fear no infringement of their rights. So conversely of the Republicans. Their traditions ought to dispose them to support Federal power against the States, but their action in a concrete case would probably depend on whether their party was at the time in condition to use that power for its own purposes. If they were in a minority in Congress, they would be little inclined to strengthen Congress against the States. The simplest way of proving or illustrating this will be to run quickly through the questions of present practical interest.

That which most keenly interests the people, though of course not all the people, is the regulation or extinction of the liquor traffic. On this neither party has committed or will commit itself. The traditional dogmas of neither cover it, though the Democrats have been rather more disposed to leave men to themselves than the Republicans, and rather less amenable to the influence of ethical sentiment. Practically for both parties the point of consequence is what they can gain or lose. Each has clearly something to lose. The drinking part of the population is chiefly foreign Now the Irish are mainly Democrats, so the Democratic party dare not offend them. The Germans are mainly Republican, so the Republicans are equally bound over to caution. It is true that though the parties, as parties, are neutral, most Temperance men are, in the North and West,[1] Republicans, most whisky-men and saloon-keepers Democrats. The Republicans therefore more frequently attempt to conciliate the anti-liquor party by flattering phrases. They suffer by the starting of a Prohibitionist candidate, since he draws more voting strength away from them than he does from the Democrats.

Free Trade *v.* Protection is another burning question, and has been so since the early days of the Union. The old controversy as to the constitutional right of Congress to impose a tariff for any object but that of raising revenue, has been laid to rest, for whether the people in 1788 meant or did not mean to confer such a power, it has been exerted for so many years, and on so superb a scale, that no one now doubts its legality. Before the war the Democrats were advocates of a tariff for revenue only *i.e.* of Free Trade. Most of them still clung to the doctrine, and have favoured a reduction of the present system of import duties. But the party trumpet has often given an uncertain sound, for Pennsylvania is Protectionist on account of its iron industries; northern Georgia and southern Tennessee are tending that way for the same reason; Louisiana is inclined to protection on account of its sugar. As it would never do to alienate the Democrats of three such districts, the party has generally sought to remain unpledged, or, at least, in winking with one eye to the Free Traders of the North-west and South-east, it has been tempted to wink with the other to the iron men of Pittsburg and the sugar planters of New Orleans.[1] And though it has come to advocate more and more strongly a reduction of the present high tariff, it does this not so much on Free Trade principles, as on the ground that the present surplus must be got rid of. The Republicans are bolder, and pledge themselves, when they frame a platform, to maintain the protective tariff. But some of the keenest intellects in their ranks, including a few leading journalists, are strong for free trade and therefore sorely tempted to break with their party.

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[1] The Southern negroes are generally supposed to be Republicans, but are generally opposed to restrictions on the sale of liquor. This was strikingly shown in the recent popular vote on the subject in Texas. On the other hand, the better class of Southern whites, who are of course Democrats, are largely Temperance men, and some States, *e.g.* Georgia, have adopted a local option system, under which each county decides whether it will be "wet" or "dry" (*i.e.* permit or forbid the sale of intoxicants). At present most of the counties of Georgia are "dry counties."

Civil service reform, whereof more hereafter, has for some time past received the lip service of both parties, a lip service expressed by both with equal warmth, and by the average professional politicians of both with equal insincerity. Such reforms as have been effected in the mode of filling up places, have been forced on the parties by public opinion, rather than carried through by either. None of the changes made—and they are perhaps the most beneficial of recent changes—has raised an issue between the parties, or given either of them a claim on the confidence of the country. The best men in both parties support the Civil Service Commission; the worst men in both would gladly get rid of it.

The advantages of regulating, by Federal legislation, railroads and telegraphic lines extending over a number of States, is a subject frequently discussed. Neither party has had anything distinctive to say upon it in the way either of advocacy or of condemnation. Both have asserted that it is the duty of railways to serve the people, and not to tyrannize over or defraud them, so the Inter-State Commerce Act which has lately been passed with this view cannot be called a party measure. Finances have on the whole been well managed, and debt paid off with surprising speed. But there have been, and are still, serious problems raised by the condition of the currency. Both parties have made mistakes, and mistakes about equally culpable, for though the Republicans, having more frequently commanded a Congressional majority, have had superior opportunities for blundering, the Democrats have once or twice more definitely committed themselves to pernicious doctrines. Neither party now proposes a clear and definite policy.

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[1] In the presidential election of 1888 the Democratic party did commit itself to a tariff reform policy, yet not quite to Free trade in the British sense.

It is the same as regards minor questions, such as women's suffrage or international copyright, or convict labour. Neither party has any distinctive attitude on these matters; neither is more likely, or less likely, than the other to pass a measure dealing with them. It is the same with regard to the doctrine of *laissez faire* as opposed to governmental interference. Neither Republicans nor Democrats can be said to be friends or foes of State interference: each will advocate it when there seems a practically useful object to be secured, or when the popular voice seems to call for it. It is the same with foreign policy. Both parties are practically agreed not only as to the general principles which ought to rule the conduct of the country, but as to the application of these principles. The party which opposes the President may at any given moment seek to damage him by defeating some particular proposal he has made, but this it will do as a piece of temporary strategy, not in pursuance of any settled doctrine.

Yet one cannot say that there is to-day no difference between the two great parties. There is a difference of spirit or sentiment perceptible even by a stranger when, after having mixed for some time with members of the one he begins to mix with those of the other, and doubtless much more patent to a native American. It resembles (though it is less marked than) the difference of tone and temper between Tories and Liberals in England. The intellectual view of a Democrat of the better sort is not quite the same as that of his Republican compeer, neither is his ethical standard. Each of course thinks meanly of the other; but while the Democrat thinks the Republican "dangerous" (*i.e.* likely to undermine the Constitution) the Republican is more apt to think the Democrat vicious and unscrupulous. So in England your Liberal fastens on stupidity as the characteristic fault of the Tory, while the Tory suspects the morals and religion more than he despises the intelligence of the Radical.

It cannot be charged on the American parties that they have drawn towards one another by forsaking their old principles. It is time that has changed the circumstances of the country, and made those old principles inapplicable. They would seem to have erred rather by clinging too long to outworn issues, and by neglecting to discover and work out new principles capable of solving the problems which now perplex the country. In a country so full of change and movement as America new questions are always coming up, and must be answered. New troubles surround a government, and a way must be found to escape from them; new diseases attack the nation, and have to be cured. The duty of a great party is to face these, to find answers and remedies, applying to the facts of the hour the doctrines it has lived by, so far as they are still applicable, and when they have ceased to be applicable, thinking out new doctrines conformable to the main principles and tendencies which it represents. This is a work to be accomplished by its ruling minds, while the habit of party loyalty to the leaders powerfully serves to diffuse through the mass of followers the conclusions of the leaders and the reasonings they have employed.

"But," the European reader may ask, "is it not the interest as well as the duty of a party thus to adapt itself to new conditions? Does it not, in failing to do so, condemn itself to sterility and impotence, ultimately, indeed, to supersession by some new party which the needs of the time have created?"

This is what happens in England and in Europe generally. Probably it will happen in the long run in America also, unless the parties adapt themselves to the new issues, just as the Whig party fell in 1852-57 because it failed to face the problem of slavery. That it happens more slowly may be ascribed partly to the completeness and strength of the party organizations, which make the enthusiasm generated by ideas less necessary, partly to the fact that the questions on which the two great parties still hesitate to take sides are not presently vital to the well-being of the country, partly also to the smaller influence in America than in Europe of individual leaders. English parties, which hesitate long over secondary questions, might hesitate longer than is now their practice over vital ones also, were they not accustomed to look for guidance to their chiefs, and to defer to the opinion which the chiefs deliver. And it is only by courage and the capacity for initiative that the chiefs themselves retain their position.

CHAPTER LV

COMPOSITION OF THE PARTIES

The less there is in the tenets of the Republicans and Democrats to make their character intelligible to a European reader, so much the more desirable is it to convey some idea of what may be called their social and local, their racial and ecclesiastical complexions.

The Republican party was formed between 1854 and 1856 chiefly out of the wrecks of the Whig party, with the addition of the Abolitionists and Free Soilers, who, disgusted at the apparent subservience to the South of the leading northern Whigs, had for some time previously acted as a group by themselves, though some of them had been apt to vote for Whig candidates. They had also recruits from the Free Soil Democrats, who had severed themselves from the bulk of the Democratic party, and some of whom claimed to be true Jeffersonians in joining the party which stood up against the spread of slavery.[1] The Republicans were therefore from the first a Northern party, more distinctly so than the Federalists had been at the close of the preceding century, and much more distinctly so than the Whigs, in whom there had been a pretty strong Southern element.

The Whig element brought to the new party solidity, political experience, and a large number of wealthy and influential adherents. The Abolitionist element gave it force and enthusiasm, qualities invaluable for the crisis which came in 1861 with the secession of all save four of the slave-holding States. During the war, it drew to itself nearly all the earnestness, patriotism, religious and moral fervour, which the North and West contained. It is still, in those regions, the party in whose ranks respectable, steady, pious, well-conducted men are to be looked for. If you find yourself dining with one of "the best people" in any New England city, or in Philadelphia, or in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, or Minneapolis, you assume that the guest sitting next you is a Republican, almost as confidently as in English county society you would assume your neighbour to be a Tory; that is to say, you may sometimes be wrong, but in four cases out of five you will be right. In New York the presumption is weaker, though even there you will be right three times out of five. One may say that all over the North, the merchants, manufacturers, and professional men of the smaller perhaps even more than of the larger towns, tend to be Republicans. So too are the farmers, particularly in the North-west, in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa. The working class in the cities is divided, but the more solid part of it, the church-goers and total abstainers, are generally Republicans. A number, still large, though of course daily diminishing, are soldiers of the Civil War; and these naturally rally to the old flag. When turning southwards one reaches the borders of the old slave States, everything is changed. In Baltimore the best people are so generally Democrats that when you meet a Republican in society you ask whether he is not an immigrant from New England. In Virginia, or the Carolinas, or the Gulf States, very few men of good standing belong to the Republican party, which consists of the lately enfranchised negroes, of a certain number of whites, seldom well regarded, who organize and use the negro vote, and who some twenty years ago were making a good thing for themselves out of it; of Federal officials, who have been put into Federal places by their friends at Washington, on the understanding that they are to work for the party, and of a certain number of stray people, perhaps settlers from the North, who have not yet renounced their former affiliations. It is not easy for an educated man to remain a Republican in the South, not only because the people he meets in society are Democrats, but because the Republican party managers are apt to be black sheep.

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[1] The name Republican was given to the new party, not without the hope of thereby making it easier for these old school Democrats to join it, for in Jefferson's day his party had been called Republican.

In the Middle States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, to which one may for this purpose add Ohio and Indiana, and on the Pacific slope, the parties are nearly balanced, and the majority of votes sways now this way now that, as the circum stances of the hour, or local causes, or the merits of individual candidates, may affect the popular mind. Pennsylvania, for instance, is now, as she has been since 1860, a Republican State, owing to her interest in a protective tariff. New York, whose legislature is usually Republican, in presidential elections generally goes Democratic. In these doubtful States, the better sort of people are mostly Republicans. It is in that party you look to find the greater number of the philanthropists, the men of culture, the men of substance who desire to see things go on quietly, with no shocks given to business confidence by rash legislation. These are great elements of strength. They have been gained for the Republican party by its earlier history, which drew into it thirty years ago those patriotic and earnest young men who are now the leading elderly men in their respective neighbourhoods. But against them must be set the tendency of a section of the Republican party, a section which includes many men of high intelligence, to break away, or, as it is called, "bolt" from the party platform and "ticket." This section explains its conduct by declaring that the great claims which the party gained on the confidence of the country by its resistance to slavery and its vigorous prosecution of the war have been forfeited by maladministration since the war ended, and by the scandals which have gathered round some of its conspicuous figures. If intelligence and cultivation dispose their possessors to desert at a critical moment, the party might be stronger without this element, for, as everybody knows, a good party man is he who stands by his friends when they are wrong.

The Democratic party suffers in the North and West from exactly the opposite causes to the Republican. It was long discredited by its sympathy with the South, and by the opposition of a considerable section within it (the so-called Copperheads) to the prosecution of the war. This shadow hung heavy over it till the complete pacification of the South and growing prominence of new questions began to call men's minds away from the war years. From 1869 to 1885 it profited from being in opposition. Saved from the opportunity of abusing patronage, or becoming complicated in administration jobs, it was able to criticize freely the blunders or vices of its opponents. It may however be doubted whether its party managers have been, take them all in all, either wiser or purer than those whom they criticized, nor do they seem to have inspired any deeper trust in the minds of impartial citizens. When, as has several times happened, the Democrats have obtained a majority in the House of Representatives, their legislation has not been higher in aim or more judicious in the choice of means than that which Republican congresses have produced. Hence the tendency to desert from the Republican ranks has enured to the benefit of the Democrats less than might have been expected. However, the Democratic party includes not only nearly all the talent education and wealth of the South, together with the bulk of the Southern farmers and poor whites, but also a respectable minority of good men in the Middle States, and a somewhat smaller minority in New England and the North-west.

In these last-mentioned districts its strength lies chiefly in the cities, a curious contrast to those earlier days when Jefferson was supported by the farmers and Hamilton by the townsfolk.[1] But the large cities have now a population unlike anything that existed eighty years ago, a vast ignorant fluctuating mass of people, many of them only recently admitted to citizenship, who have little reason for belonging to one party rather than another, but are attracted some by the name of the Democratic party, some by the fact that it is not the party of the well-to-do, some by the leaders belonging to their own races who have risen to influence in its ranks. The adhesion of this mob gives the party a slight flavour of rowdyism, as its old associations give it, to a Puritan palate, a slight flavour of irreligion. Twenty years ago, a New England deacon—the deacon is in America the type of solid respectability—would have found it as hard to vote for a Democratic candidate as an English archdeacon to vote for a Birmingham Radical. But these old feelings have begun to wear away. A new generation of voters has arisen which never saw slavery, and which cares little about Jefferson for good or for evil. This generation takes parties as it finds them. Even among the older voters there has been a sensible change within the last five years. Many of the best Republicans, who remembered the Democrats as the party of which a strong section sympathized with the slaveholders before the war, and disapproved of the war while it was being waged, looked with horror on the advent to power of a Democratic president. The country, however, was not ruined by Mr. Cleveland, but on the contrary went on much as before, its elements of good and evil mixed and contending, just as under Republican administrations. However, the Republican leaders still point to the fact that the Democratic party commands the solid vote of the States where slavery formerly existed as a reason why it should excite the distrust of good citizens who fought for the Union.

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[1] Jefferson regarded agriculture as so much the best occupation for citizens that he was alarmed by the rumour that the codfish of the North-eastern coasts were coming down to the shores of Virginia and Carolina, lest the people of those States should "be tempted to catch them, and commerce, of which we have already too much, receive an accession."

Now that differences of political doctrine are not accentuated, race differences play a considerable part in the composition of the parties. Besides the native Americans, there are men of five nationalities in the United States—British, Irish, Germans, Scandinavians, French Canadians.[1] Of these, however, the English and Scotch lose their identity almost immediately, being absorbed into the general mass of native citizens. Though very numerous, they have hitherto counted for nothing politically, because English immigrants have either been indifferent to political struggles or have voted from the same motives as an average American. They have to a large extent remained British subjects, not caring for the suffrage. But quite recently an effort has been made (apparently chiefly for the sake of counter-working the Irish) to induce them to apply for citizenship and exert their voting power as a united body. It may be doubted whether they will become citizens to any great extent, or whether, if they do, they will cast a solid vote.

Far otherwise with the Irish. They retain their national spirit and disposition to act together into the second, rarely however into the third, generation; they are a factor potent in Federal and still more potent in city politics. Now the Irish have hitherto been nearly all Democrats. When the great exodus from Ireland began in 1846-50,[2] the first-comers joined the Democratic party, probably because it was less Protestant in sentiment than the Whig party, and was already dominant in the city of New York, where the Irish first became a power in politics. The aversion to the negro which they soon developed, made them, when the Republican party arose, its natural enemies, for the Republicans were, both during and after the war, the negro's patrons. Before the war ended the Irish vote had come to form a large part of the Democratic strength, and Irishmen were prominent among the politicians of that party: hence newcomers from Ireland have generally enlisted under its banner. To-day, however, there are plenty of Irishmen, and indeed of Irish leaders and bosses, among the Republicans of the great cities; and statesmen of that party often seek to "placate" and attract the Irish vote in ways too familiar to need description.

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[1] There are also Poles, Czechs, and Italians; but their number, except in two or three of the Atlantic cities, to which I may perhaps add Chicago, Milwaukee, and the mining regions of Pennsylvania, is relatively small, though increasing more rapidly of late years. Austro-Hungarian Slavs have begun to come lately.

[2] There had been considerable immigration from Ireland before the great famine of 1846-47, but that is the date when it swelled to vast proportions.

The German immigration, excluding of course the early German settlements in Pennsylvania, began rather later than the Irish; and as there is some jealousy between the two races, the fact that the Irish were already Democrats when the Germans arrived, may be one reason why the latter have been more inclined to enrol themselves as Republicans. The Germans usually become farmers in the Middle and Western States, where, finding the native farmers mainly Republicans, they imitate the politics of their neighbours. That there are many German Democrats in the great cities may be ascribed to the rather less friendly attitude of the Republicans to the liquor traffic, for the German colonist is faithful to the beer of his fatherland, and, in the case of the Roman Catholic Germans, to the tacit alliance which has subsisted in many districts between the Catholic Church and the Democrats. The Germans are a cohesive race, keeping up national sentiment by festivals, gymnastic societies, processions, and national songs, but as they take much less keenly to politics, and are not kept together by priests, their cohesion is more short-lived than that of the Irish. The American-born son of a German is already completely an American in feeling as well as in practical aptitude. The German vote over the whole Union may be roughly estimated as three-fifths Republican, two-fifths Democratic.

The Scandinavians—Swedes and Norwegians, with a few Danes and a handful of Icelanders—now form a respectable element among the farmers of the Upper Mississippi States, particularly Wisconsin and Minnesota. So far as can be judged from the short experience the country has of them, for it is only some twenty-five years since their immigration began, they Americanize even more readily than their Teutonic cousins from the southern side of the Baltic. However, both Swedes and Norwegians are still so far clannish that in these States both parties find it worth while to run for office now and then a candidate of one or other, or candidates of both of these nationalities, in order to catch the votes of his or their compatriots.[1] Nine-tenths of them are Republicans. Like the Germans, they come knowing nothing of American politics, but the watchful energy of the native party-workers enlists them under a party banner as soon as they are admitted to civic rights. They make perhaps the best material for sober and industrious agriculturists that America receives, being even readier than the Germans to face hardship, and more content to dispense with alcoholic drinks.

The French Canadians are numerous in New England, and in one or two other Northern States, yet not numerous enough to tell upon politics, especially as they frequently remain British subjects. Their religion disposes those who become citizens to side with the Democratic party, but they do not constitute what is called "a vote," and occasionally "go Republican."

The negroes in the Northern, Middle, and Pacific States are an element too small to be of much importance as voters. Gratitude for the favour shown to their race has kept them mostly but not exclusively Republicans. They are seldom admitted to a leading place in party organizations, but it is found expedient in presidential contests to organize a "coloured club" to work for the candidate among the coloured population of a town. In the South, and more particularly in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi, their mere numbers would enable them, were they equal to the whites in intelligence, wealth, and organization, to carry not merely congressional seats, but even in some States to determine a presidential election. But in these three respects they are unspeakably inferior. At first, under the leadership of some white adventurers, mostly of the "carpet-bagger" class, they went almost solid for the Republican party; and occasionally, even since the withdrawal of Federal troops, they have turned the balance in its favour. Now, however, the Democrats have completely gained the upper hand; and the negroes, perhaps losing faith in their former bosses, perhaps discouraged by seeing themselves unfit to cope with a superior race, perhaps less interested than at first in their new privileges, have begun to lose their solidarity. A certain number now vote with the Democrats. The force and fraud which the whites have used cannot be justified; but he who has travelled in the South and seen the ignorance of the negroes and the turpitude of the carpet-baggers whose profession it was to lead and "run" them, will admit some force in the excuses which the Southern Democrats give for their manipulation of election machinery.[1]

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[1] One is told that there is some little jealousy between Swedes and Norwegians, so that where they are equally strong it is not safe to put forward a candidate of either race without placing on the same ticket a candidate of the other also.

Religion comes very little into American party. Roman Catholics are usually Democrats, because, except in Maryland, which is Democratic anyhow, they are mainly Irish. Congregationalists and Unitarians, being presumably sprung from New England, are apt to be Republicans. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, have no special party affinities. They are mostly Republicans in the Northern States, Democrats in the South. The Mormons fight for their own hand, and in the two Territories which they inhabit,[2] have been wont to cast their votes, under the direction of their hierarchy, for the local party which promised to interfere least with them.

From what has been said it will be perceived that the distribution of parties is to some extent geographical. While the South casts a solid Democratic vote, the strength of the Republicans lies in the North-east and North-west; and the intermediate position of the Middle States corresponds to their divided political tendencies. The reason is that in America colonization has gone on along parallels of latitude. The tendencies of New England reappear in Northern Ohio, Northern Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, giving the Republicans a predominance in this vast and swiftly-growing Western population, which it takes the whole weight of the solid South to balance. This geographical opposition does not, however, betoken a danger of political severance. The material interests of the agriculturists of the North-west are not different from those of the South: free trade, for instance, will make as much and no more difference to the wheat-grower of Illinois as to the cotton-grower of Texas, to the iron-workers of Tennessee as to the iron-workers of Pennsylvania. And the existence of an active Democratic party in the North prevents the victory of either geographical section from being felt as a defeat by the other.

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[1] See further on this point, Chapter LXXXII.

[2] Utah and Idaho. There are also a few in Arizona.

This is an important security against disruption. And a similar security against the risk of civil strife or revolution is to be found in the fact, already explained, that the American parties are not based on or sensibly affected by differences either of wealth or of social position. Their cleavage is not horizontal according to social strata, but vertical. This would be less true if it were stated either of the Northern States separately, or of the Southern States separately: it is true of the Union taken as a whole. It might cease to be true if the new labour party were to grow till it absorbed or superseded either of the existing parties. The same feature has characterized English politics as compared with those of most European countries, and has been a main cause of the stability of the English government and of the good feeling between different classes in the community.[1]

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[1] At the present moment the vast majority of the rich, a proportion probably larger than at any previous time, at any rate since 1827, belong in England to one of the two historic parties. But this phenomenon may possibly pass away.

CHAPTER LVI

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARTIES

Besides the two great parties which have divided America for thirty years, there are two or three lesser organizations or factions needing a word of mention. Sixty years ago there was a period when one of the two great parties having melted away, the other had become split up into minor sections.[1] Parties were numerous and unstable, new ones forming, and after a short career uniting with some other, or vanishing altogether from the scene. This was a phenomenon peculiar to that time, and ceased with the building up about 1832 of the Whig party, which lasted till shortly before the Civil War. But De Tocqueville, who visited America in 1831-32, took it for the normal state of a democratic community, and founded upon it some bold generalizations. A stranger who sees how few principles now exist to hold each of the two great modern parties together will be rather surprised that they have not shown more tendency to split up into minor groups and factions.

What constitutes a party? In America there is a simple test. Any section of men who nominate candidates of their own for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States are deemed a national party. Adopting this test we shall find that there are now two or three national parties in addition to the Republicans and Democrats.

The first is that of the Greenbackers, who arose soon after the end of the war. They demand a large issue of greenbacks (*i.e.* paper money, so called from the colour of the notes issued during the war), alleging that this will be a benefit to the poorer classes, who will obviously be richer when there is more money in the country. It may seem incredible that there should still be masses of civilized men who believe that money is value, and that a liberal issue of stamped paper can give the poor more bread or better clothes. If there were a large class of debtors, and the idea was to depreciate the currency and let them then pay their debts in it, one could understand the proposal. Such a depreciation existed during and immediately after the Civil War. As wages and prices had risen enormously, people were receiving more money in wages, or for goods sold, than they had received previously, while they were paying fixed charges, such as interest on mortgage debts, in a depreciated paper currency. Thus the working classes were on the whole gainers, while creditors and persons with fixed incomes were losers. It is true that the working men were also paying more for whatever they needed, food, clothes, and lodging; still they seem to have felt more benefit in receiving larger sums than they felt hardship in paying out larger sums. Those who now call for greenbacks do not profess to wish to depreciate the currency: nor are those who have supported them to any very great extent a debtor class to which a depreciated currency would be welcome, as a debased coinage served the momentary occasions of mediæval kings. But the recollections of the war time with its high wages cling to many people, and are coupled with a confused notion that the more money there is in circulation so much the more of it will everybody have, and so much the better off will he be; so much the more employment will capital find for labour, and so much the more copious will be the fertilizing stream of wages diffused among the poor.[1]

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[1] The same phenomenon reappeared at the break-up of the Whigs between 1852 and 1857, and from much the same cause.

The Greenback party, which at first called itself Independent, held a national Nominating Convention in 1876, at which nineteen States were represented, and nominated candidates for president and vice-president, issuing an emphatic but ungrammatical denunciation of the financial policy of the Republican and Democratic parties. They again put forward candidates in 1880 and 1884, but made a poor show in the voting in most States, and of course came nowhere within a measurable distance of carrying a State.

The Labour party has of late years practically superseded the Greenbackers, and seems to have now drawn to itself such adherents as that party retained. It is not easy to describe its precise tenets, for it includes persons of very various views, some who would be called in Europe pronounced socialists or communists, others who wish to restrain the action of railway and telegraph companies and other so-called "monopolists," and of course many who, while dissatisfied with existing economic conditions, and desiring to see the working classes receive a larger share of the good things of the world, are not prepared to say in what way these conditions can be mended and this result attained. Speaking generally, the reforms advocated by the leaders of the Labour party include the "nationalization of the land," the imposition of a progressive income tax,[1] the taking over of railroads and telegraphs by the National government, the prevention of the immigration of Chinese and of any other foreign labourers who may come under contract, the restriction of all so-called monopolies, the forfeiture (where legally possible) of railroad land grants, the increase of the currency, the free issue of inconvertible paper, and, above all, the statutory restriction of hours of labour. But it must not be supposed that all the leaders adopt all these tenets; and the party is still too young to make it easy to say who are to be deemed its leaders. It shows a tendency to split up into factions. Its strength has lain in the trade unions of the operative class, and particularly in the enormous organization or league of trade unions known as the Knights of Labour: and it is therefore warmly interested in the administration of the various State laws which affect strikes and the practice of boycotting by which strikes often seek to prevail. Besides the enrolled Knights, whose political strength seems to be less feared now than it was some years ago, it has much support from the recent immigrants who fill the great cities, especially the Germans, Poles, and Czechs.

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[1] The matter is further complicated by the fact that the national bank-notes issued by the national banks are guaranteed by government bonds deposited with the U.S. treasury, bonds on which the national government pays interest. The greenbackers desire to substitute greenbacks, or so-called "fiat money," for these bank-notes as a circulating medium

The Labour party did not run a presidential candidate till 1888, and was then divided, so that it is hard to judge its full strength. But it has been wont to put forward candidates in State and city elections when it saw a chance. It ran Mr. Henry George for Mayor of New York City in 1886, and obtained the unexpected success of polling 67,000 votes against 90,000 given to the regular Democratic, and 60,000 to the regular Republican candidate;[1] but this success was not sustained in the contest for the Secretaryship of the State of New York in 1887, when a vote of only 37,000 was cast by the Labour party in the city. At present it is a somewhat incalculable force in politics, nowhere strong enough to carry its own candidates, but sometimes strong enough to defeat one of the regular parties by drawing away a part of its voters, or to extort a share of the offices for some of its nominees. It is only in some States, chiefly Northern States, that Labour candidates are run at all.

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[1] This was demanded by the Greenback national convention in its platform of 1880, and again in 1884; but one hears very little about it in America. Its recent adoption in the Canton of Vaud in Switzerland had the effect of causing some of the wealthier inhabitants to quit the canton.

The Prohibitionists, or opponents of the sale of intoxicating liquors, have since 1872 regularly held a national convention for the nomination of a presidential candidate, and put out a ticket, *i.e.* nominated candidates for president and vice-president. The action of this party has been most frequent in the State legislatures, because the whole question of permitting, restricting, or abolishing the sale of intoxicants is a matter for the States and not for Congress. However, the Federal government raises a large revenue by its high import duty on wines, spirits, and malt liquors, and also levies an internal excise. As this revenue is no longer needed for the expenses of the national government, it has been proposed to distribute it among the States, or apply it to some new and useful purpose, or to reduce both customs duties and the excise. The fear of the first or second of these courses, which would give the manufacture and sale of intoxicants a new lease of life, or of the third, which would greatly increase their consumption, has induced the Prohibitionists to enter the arena of national politics; and they further justify their conduct in doing so by proposing to amend the Federal Constitution for the purposes of prohibition, and to stop the sale of intoxicants in the Territories and in the District of Columbia, which are under the direct control of Congress.[2] Their

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[1] In 1874 when a Labour candidate was first run for the New York mayoralty he obtained only between 3000 and 4000 votes.

[2] The Prohibitionist platform of 1884, issued by their national convention, contained the following passage:—

"Congress should exercise its undoubted power and prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages in the District of Columbia, in the Territories of the United States, and in all places over which the Government has exclusive running a candidate for the Presidency is more a demonstration than anything else, as they have a comparatively weak vote to cast, many even of those who sympathize with them preferring to support one or other of the great parties rather than throw away a vote in the abstract assertion of a principle. One ought indeed to distinguish between the Prohibitionists proper, who wish to stop the sale of intoxicants altogether, and the Temperance men, who are very numerous among Republicans in the North and Democrats in the South, and who, while ready to vote for Local Option and a High Licence Law, disapprove the attempt to impose absolute prohibition by general legislation.[1] The number of persons who are thorough-going Prohibitionists and pure Prohibitionists, that is to say, who are not also Republicans or Democrats, is small, far too small, even when reinforced by a section of the "Temperance men," and by discontented Republicans or Democrats who may dislike the "regular" candidates of their party, to give the Prohibition ticket a chance of success in any State. The importance of the ticket lies in the fact that in a doubtful State it may draw away enough votes from one of the "regular" candidates to leave him in a minority. Mr. Blaine probably suffered in this way in the election of 1884, most of the votes cast for the Prohibitionist candidate having come from quondam Republicans. On the other hand, a case may be imagined in which the existence of an outlet or safety-valve, such as a Prohibitionist ticket, would prevent the "bolters" from one party from taking the more dangerous course of voting for the candidate of the opposite party.[2]

The strength of the Prohibitionist party lies in the religious

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jurisdiction; that hereafter no State shall be admitted to the Union until its Constitution shall expressly prohibit polygamy and the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages."

One might have expected the Prohibitionists to advocate the repeal of the protective tariff on manufactured goods so as to make it necessary to maintain customs duties and an excise on intoxicants for the purposes of the national government. But this would imply that these beverages might still be consumed, which is just what the more ardent spirits in the temperance party refuse to contemplate.

[1] Some State legislatures have "placated" the Temperance men by enacting that "the hygienics of alcohol and its action upon the human body" shall be a regular subject of instruction in the public schools.

[2] The Prohibitionist Convention of 1888 was attended by a good many persons desiring to form a new Third Party, of which the regulation of the liquor traffic should not be the only basis.

and moral earnestness which animates it and makes it for many purposes the successor and representative of the Abolitionists of forty years ago. Clergymen are prominent in its conventions, and women take an active part in its work. Partly from its traditions and temper, partly because it believes that women would be on its side in elections, it advocates the extension to them of the electoral franchise.

The Women's Suffrage party is perhaps hardly to be reckoned a party, firstly, because it consists chiefly of women who have no vote in elections; secondly, because it does not run a presidential candidate. In 1884 it nominated a woman as candidate, but she did not go to the poll. It includes, however, a few persons who profess indifference to other political questions and agitate for this cause alone. It has hitherto failed to get the franchise extended to women in any State, although this has been done in the Territories of Wyoming and Utah, and was done in Washington, with what results for good or evil is much disputed.[1]

The European reader may perhaps wish to hear something as to the new group which goes by the name of Mugwumps.[2] At the presidential election of 1884 a section of the Republican party, more important by the intelligence and social position of the men who composed it than by its numbers, "bolted" (to use the technical term) from their party, and refused to vote for Mr. Blaine. Some simply abstained, some, obeying the impulse to vote which is strong in good citizens in America, voted for Mr. St. John, the Prohibitionist candidate, though well aware that this was practically the same thing as abstention. The majority, however, voted against their party for Mr. Cleveland, the Democratic candidate; and it seems to have been the transference of their vote which turned the balance in New York State, and thereby determined the issue of the whole election in Mr. Cleveland's favour. They were therefore not to be reckoned as a national party, according to the American use of the term, because they did not run a ticket of their own, but voted for a candidate started by one of the regular parties. The only organization they formed consisted of committees which held meetings and distributed literature during the election, but dissolved when it was over. They maintain no permanent party machinery; and did not act as a distinct section, even for the purposes of agitation, at the presidential election of 1888.

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[1] See further as to women's suffrage, Chapter XCII.

[2] The name is said to be formed from an Indian word denoting a chief or aged wise man, and was applied by the "straight-out" Republicans to their bolting brethren as a term of ridicule. It was then taken up by the latter as a term of compliment; though the description they used formally in 1884 was that of "Independent Republicans."

The Mugwumps bear no more resemblance to any English party than does any other of the parties of the United States, for the chief doctrine they advocate is one not in controversy in England, the necessity of reforming the civil service by making appointments without reference to party, and a general reform in the methods of politics by selecting men for Federal, State, and municipal offices, with reference rather to personal fitness than to political affiliations. They are most numerous in New England and in the cities of the eastern States generally, but some few are scattered here and there all over the North and West as far as California. It is, however, only in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut that they seem to have constituted an appreciably potent vote. In the South there were none, because the Southern men who would, had they lived in the North, have taken to Mugwumpism, are in the South Democrats, and therefore voted for Mr. Cleveland anyhow. Nor does there seem to be in the Democratic party, either in North or South, as much material for a secession similar to that of the "bolters" of 1884 as was then shown to exist among the Republicans.

The reader must be reminded of one capital difference between the Republican and Democratic parties and the minor ones which have just been mentioned. The two former are absolutely co-extensive with the Union. They exist in every State, and in every corner of every State. They exist even in the five Territories, though the inhabitants of Territories have no vote in Federal elections. But the Labour party and the Prohibition party, although each maintains a more or less permanent organization in many States, do not attempt to do so in all States,[2] much less to fight all the elections in those States. Where they are strong, or where some question has arisen which keenly interests them,

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[1] In 1888 some voted for Mr. Harrison, some, and especially those inclined to free trade, for Mr. Cleveland.

[2] In the election of 1880, votes were given for the Greenback candidate in all the States but three (308,578 votes in all), and for the Prohibitionist in seventeen States out of the thirty-eight (10,305 votes in all). In 1884 votes were given for the Greenback candidate in 29 States, and for the Prohibitionist in 33 States. In 1888 there was some scattering, and the Labour party was divided. One of its candidates had 144,603 votes, the other 3073. The Prohibitionist had 246,406.

they will run their man for State governor, or mayor, or will put out a ticket for State senators or Assembly men: or they will take the often more profitable course of fusing for the nonce with one of the regular parties, giving it their vote in return for having the party nominations to one or more of the elective offices assigned to their own nominee.[1] This helps to keep the party going, and gives to its vote a practical result otherwise unattainable.

Is there not then, some European may ask, a Free Trade party? Not in the American sense of the word. Free trade doctrines are professed by most Democrats, especially in the South and West, though rather in the practical form of the advocacy of a reduced tariff than in that of the general doctrine as it was preached by Cobden, and by some few Republicans whose importance is due not to their numbers, but to the influence they exert as writers or teachers. There is a society which seeks to educate opinion by publishing books and pamphlets on the subject; but it is no more a political force than the similar society in France, or the Cobden Club in England. There is no political organization which agitates for free trade by the usual party methods, much less does any one think of starting candidates either for the Presidency or for Congress upon a pure anti-protectionist platform,[2] although the election of 1888 largely turned upon this particular issue.

Why, considering the reluctant hesitancy of the old parties in dealing with new questions, and considering also that in the immense area of the United States, with its endless variety of economic interests and social conditions, we might expect local diversities of aim and view which would crystallize, and so give rise to many local parties—why are not the parties far more numerous? Why, too, are the parties so persistent? In this changeful country one would look for frequent changes in tenets and methods.

One reason is, that there is at present a strong feeling in America against any sentiment or organization which relies on or appeals to one particular region of the country. Such localism or sectionalism is hateful, because, recalling the disunionist spirit of the South which led to the war, it seems anti-national and unpatriotic. By the mere fact of its springing from a local root, and urging a local interest, a party would set all the rest of the country against it. As a separately organized faction seeking to capture the Federal government, it could not succeed against the national parties, because the Union as a whole is so vast that it would be outvoted by one or other of them. But if it is content to remain a mere opinion or demand, not attacking either national party, but willing to bestow the votes it can control on whichever will meet its wishes, it is powerful, because the two great parties will bid against one another for its support by flatteries and concessions. For instance, the question which interests the masses on the Pacific coast is that of excluding Chinese immigrants, because they compete for work with the whites and bring down wages. Now if the "anti-Mongolians" of California Nevada and Oregon were to create a national party, based on this particular issue, they would be insignificant, for they would have little support over five-sixths of the Union. But by showing that the attitude of the two great parties on this issue will determine their own attitude towards these parties, they control both, for as each desires to secure the vote of California, Nevada, and Oregon, each vies with the other in promising and voting for anti-Chinese legislation. The position of the Irish extremists is similar, except of course that they are a racial and not a geographical "section." Their power, which Congress has sometimes recognized in a way scarcely compatible with its dignity or with international courtesy, lies in the fact that as the Republicans and Democrats are nearly balanced, the congressional leaders of both desire to "placate" this faction, for which neither has a sincere affection. An Irish party, or a German party, or a Roman Catholic party, which should run its candidates on a sectional platform, would stand self-condemned in American eyes as not being genuinely American. But so long as it is content to seek control over parties and candidates, it exerts an influence out of proportion to its numbers, and checked only by the fear that if it demanded too much native Americans might rebel, as they did in the famous Know-Nothing or "American" party of 1852-60. The same fate would befall a party based upon some trade interest, such as protection to manufactures, or the stimulation of cattle-breeding, or on the defence of the claims of the

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[1] The Greenbackers or Labour men seem to do this pretty frequently, the Prohibitionists, I fancy, much more rarely.

[2] It would of course be absurd to run candidates for State office or municipal office on such a platform, inasmuch as the tariff is a matter purely for the national legislature.

New England fishermen. Such a party might succeed for a time in a State, and might dictate its terms to one or both of the national parties; but when it attempted to be a national party it would become ridiculous and fall.

A second cause of the phenomenon which I am endeavouring to explain may be found in the enormous trouble and expense required to found a new national party. To influence the votes, even to reach the ears of a population of sixty millions of people, is an undertaking to be entered on only when some really great cause fires the national imagination, disposes the people to listen, persuades the wealthy to spend freely of their substance. It took six years of intense work to build up the Republican party, which might not even then have triumphed in the election of 1860, but for the split in the ranks of its opponents. The attempt made in 1872 to form a new independent party out of the discontented Republicans and the Democrats failed lamentably. The Independent Republicans of 1884 did not venture to start a programme or candidate of their own, but were prudently satisfied with helping the Democratic candidate, whom they deemed more likely than the nominee of the Republican party convention to give effect to the doctrine of civil service reform which they advocate.

The case of these Independents, or Mugwumps, is an illustrative one. For many years past there have been complaints that the two old parties were failing to deal with issues now of capital importance, such as the tariff, the currency, the improvement of methods of business in Congress, the purification of the civil service, and extinction of the so-called Spoils system. These complaints, however, have not come from the men prominent as practical statesmen or politicians in the parties, but from outsiders, and largely from the men of intellectual cultivation and comparatively high social standing. Very few of these men take an active part in "politics," however interested they may be in public affairs. They are amateurs as regards the practical work of "running" ward meetings and conventions, of framing "tickets," and bringing up voters to the poll, in fact of working as well as organizing that vast and complicated machinery which an American party needs. Besides, it is a costly machinery, and they might be unable to find the money. Hence they recoil from the effort, and aim at creating a sentiment which may take concrete form in a vote, given for whichever of the parties seems at any particular time most likely to adopt, even if insincerely, the principles, and give effect, even if reluctantly, to the measures which the Independents advocate.

Why, however, do not the professional politicians who "know the ropes," and know where to get the necessary funds, more frequently seek to wreck a party in order to found a new one more to their mind? Because they are pretty well satisfied with the sphere which existing parties give them, and comprehend from their practical experience how hazardous such an experiment would be.

These considerations may help to explain the remarkable cohesion of parties in America, and the strength of party loyalty, a phenomenon more natural in Europe, where momentous issues inflame men's passions, and where the bulk of the adherents are ignorant men, caught by watchwords and readily attracted to a leader, than in a republic where no party has any benefit to promise to the people which it may not as well get from the other, and where the voter is a keen-witted man, with little reverence for the authority of any individual. There is however another reason flowing from the character of the American people. They are extremely fond of associating themselves, and prone to cling to any organization they have once joined. They are sensitive to any charge of disloyalty. They are gregarious, each man more disposed to go with the multitude and do as they do than to take a line of his own,[1] and they enjoy "campaigning" for its own sake. These are characteristics which themselves require to be accounted for, but the discussion of them belongs to later chapters. A European is surprised to see prominent politicians supporting, sometimes effusively, a candidate of their own party whom they are known to dislike, merely because he is the party candidate. There is a sort of military discipline about party life which has its good as well as its bad side, for if it sometimes checks the expression of honest disapproval, it also restrains jealousy, abashes self-seeking, prevents recrimination.

Each of the American parties is far less under the control of one or two conspicuous leaders than are European parties. So far as this is due to the absence of men whose power over the people rests on the possession of brilliant oratorical or administrative gifts, it is a part of the question why there are not more such men in American public life, why there are fewer striking figures than in the days of Jefferson and Hamilton, of Webster and Calhoun. It is however also due to the peculiarities of the Constitution. The want of concentration of power in the legal government is reflected in the structure of the party system. The separation of the legislative from the executive department lowers the importance of leadership in parties, as it weakens both these departments. The President, who is presumably among the leading men, cannot properly direct the policy of his party, still less speak for it in public, because he represents the whole nation. His ministers cannot speak to the people through Congress. In neither House of Congress is there necessarily any person recognized as the leader on either side. As neither House has the power over legislation and administration possessed by such an assembly as the French or Italian Chamber, or the English House of Commons, speeches delivered or strategy displayed in it do not tell upon the country with equal force and directness. There remains the stump, and it is more by the stump than in any other way that an American statesman speaks to the people. But what distances to be traversed, what fatigues to be encountered before he can be a living and attractive personality to the electing masses! An English statesman leaves London at three o'clock, and speaks in Birmingham, or Leeds, or Manchester, the same evening. In a few years, every great town knows him like its own mayor, while the active local politicians who frequently run up from their homes to London hear him from the galleries of the House of Commons, wait on him in deputations, are invited to the receptions which his wife gives during the season. Even railways and telegraphs cannot make America a compact country in the same sense that Britain is.

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[1] That is to say, they respect the authority of the mass, to which they themselves belong, though seldom that of individual leaders. See *post*, Chapter LXXXIV.—"The Fatalism of the Multitude."

Since the Civil War ended, neither Republicans nor Democrats have leaned on and followed any one man as Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield, as before them Lords Derby, John Russell, and Palmerston, as still earlier Sir Robert Peel and Lord Melbourne, were followed in England. No one since Mr. Seward has exercised even so much authority as Mr. Bright did when out of office, or as Gambetta did in France, or as Mr. Parnell does in Ireland, over the sections of opinion which each of these eminent men has represented.

How then are the parties led in Congress and the country? Who directs their policy? Who selects their candidates for the chief posts? These are questions which cannot be adequately answered till the nature of the party machinery has been described. For the moment I must be content to suggest the following as provisional answers:—

The most important thing is the selection of candidates. This is done in party meetings called conventions. When a party has any policy, it is settled in such a convention and declared in a document called a platform. When it has none, the platform is issued none the less. Party tactics in Congress are decided on by meetings of the party in each House of Congress called caucuses. Leaders have of course much to do with all three processes. But they often efface themselves out of respect to the sentiment of equality, and because power concealed excites less envy.

How do the parties affect social life? At present not very much, at least in the northern and middle States, because it is a slack time in politics. Your dining acquaintances, even your intimate friends, are not necessarily of the same way of voting as yourself, and though of course political views tend to become hereditary, there is nothing to surprise any one in finding sons belonging to different parties from their fathers. In the South, where the recollections of the great struggle are kept alive by the presence of a negro voting power which has to be controlled, things are different: and they were different in the North till the passions of civil strife had abated.

So far, I have spoken of the parties only as national organizations, struggling for and acting on or through the Federal government. But it has already been observed (Chapter XLVI.) that they exist also as State and city organizations, contending for the places which States and cities have to give, seeking to control State legislatures and municipal councils. Every circumscription of State and local government, from the State of New York with its six millions of inhabitants down to the "city" that has just sprung up round a railway junction in the West, has a regular Republican party organization, confronted by a similar Democratic organization, each running its own ticket (*i.e.* list of candidates) at every election, for any office pertaining to its own circumscription, and each federated, so to speak, to the larger organizations above it, represented in them and working for them in drilling and "energizing" the party within the area which is the sphere of its action.

What have the tenets of such national parties as the Republicans and Democrats to do with the politics of States and cities? Very little with those of States, because a matter for Federal legislation is seldom also a matter for State legislation. Still less with those of cities or counties. Cities and counties have not strictly speaking any political questions to deal with; their business is to pave and light, to keep the streets clean, maintain an efficient police and well-barred prisons, administer the poor law and charitable institutions with integrity, judgment, and economy. The laws regulating these matters have been already made by the State, and the city or county authority has nothing to do but administer them. Hence at city and county elections the main objects ought to be to choose honest and careful men of business. The opinions of candidates as to free trade, or the respective rights of the Union and the States do not signify, because they cannot apply these opinions to the questions which will come before them officially. It need make no difference to the action of a mayor or school trustee in any concrete question whether he holds Democratic or Republican views.

However, the habit of party warfare has been so strong as to draw all elections into its vortex; nor would either party feel safe if it neglected the means of rallying and drilling its supporters, which State and local contests supply. There is this advantage in the system, that it stimulates the political interest of the people, which is kept alive by this perpetual agitation. But the multiplicity of contests has the effect of making politics too absorbing an occupation for the ordinary citizen who has his profession or business to attend to; while the result claimed by those who in England defend the practice of fighting municipal elections on party lines, viz. that good men are induced to stand for local office for the sake of their party, is the last result desired by the politicians, or expected by any one. It is this constant labour which the business of politics involves, this ramification of party into all the nooks and corners of local government, that has produced the class of professional politicians, of whom it is now time to speak.

CHAPTER LVII

THE POLITICIANS

INSTITUTIONS are said to form men, but it is no less true that men give to institutions their colour and tendency. It profits little to know the legal rules and methods and observances of government, unless one also knows something of the human beings who tend and direct this machinery, and who, by the spirit in which they work it, may render it the potent instrument of good or evil to the people. These men are the politicians.

What is one to include under this term? In England it usually denotes those who are actively occupied in administering or legislating, or discussing administration and legislation. That is to say, it includes ministers of the Crown, members of Parliament (though some in the House of Commons and the majority in the House of Lords care little about politics), a few leading journalists, and a small number of miscellaneous persons, writers, lecturers, organizers, agitators, who occupy themselves with trying to influence the public. Sometimes the term is given a wider sweep, being taken to include all who labour for their political party in the constituencies, as *e.g.* the chairmen and secretaries of local party associations, and the more active committee men of the same bodies.[1] The former, whom we may call the Inner Circle men, are professional politicians in this sense, and in this sense only, that politics is the main though seldom the sole business of their lives. But at present extremely few of them make anything by it in the way of money. A handful hope to get some post; a somewhat larger number find that a seat in Parliament enables them to push their financial undertakings or gives them at least a better standing in the commercial world. But the making of a livelihood does not come into the view of the great majority at all. The other class, who may be called the Outer Circle, are not professionals in any sense, being primarily occupied with their own avocations; and none of them, except here and there an organizing secretary, paid lecturer, or registration agent, makes any profit out of the work.[1] The phenomena of France and Italy and Germany are generally similar, that is to say, those who devote their whole time to politics are a very small class, those who make a living by it an even smaller one.[2] Of all the countries of Europe, Greece is that in which persons who spend their life in politics seem to bear the largest proportion to the whole population; and in Greece the pursuit of politics is usually the pursuit of place.

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[1] In America (Canada as well as the United States) people do not say "politicians," but "the politicians," because the word indicates a class with certain defined characteristics.

To see why things are different in the United States, why the Inner Circle is much larger both absolutely and relatively to the Outer Circle than in Europe, let us go back a little and ask what are the conditions which develop a political class. The point has so important a bearing on the characteristics of American politicians that I do not fear to dwell somewhat fully upon it.

In self-governing communities of the simpler kind—for one may leave absolute monarchies and feudal monarchies on one side—the common affairs are everybody's business and nobody's special business. Some few men by their personal qualities get a larger share of authority, and are repeatedly chosen to be archons, or generals, or consuls, or burgomasters, or landammans, but even these rarely give their whole time to the State, and make little or nothing in money out of it. This was the condition of the Greek republics, of early Rome,[3] of the cities of mediæval Germany and Italy, of the cantons of Switzerland till very recent times.

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[1] Of course now and then a man who has worked hard for his party is rewarded by a place. Barristers who have spent their substance in contesting seats have a better chance of judgeships, and there are usually five or six practising counsel in the House of Commons who are supposed to contemplate the possibility of their obtaining legal office. But these cases are so few as to make no practical difference.

[2] The number of persons who live off politics by getting places or by manipulating finance is said to have increased in France of late years. But it cannot be very large even now.

[3] The principal business in life of Cincinnatus was to till his fields, and a dictatorship a mere interlude. When I waited on the president of the Republic of Andorra, one of the oldest states in Europe, some years ago, I found him with his coat off wielding a flail on the floor of his barn.

When in a large country public affairs become more engrossing to those who are occupied in them, when the sphere of government widens, when administration is more complex and more closely interlaced with the industrial interests of the community and of the world at large, so that there is more to be known and to be considered, the business of a nation falls into the hands of the men eminent by rank, wealth, and ability, who form a sort of governing class, largely hereditary. The higher civil administration of the state is in their hands; they fill the chief council or legislative chamber and conduct its debates. They have residences in the capital, and though they receive salaries when actually filling an office, the majority possess independent means, and pursue politics for the sake of fame, power, or excitement. Those few who have not independent means can follow their business or profession in the capital, or can frequently visit the place where their business is carried on. This was the condition of Rome under the later republic,[1] and of England and France till quite lately—indeed it is largely the case in England still—as well as of Prussia and Sweden.[2]

Let us see what are the conditions of the United States.

There is a relatively small leisured class of persons engaged in no occupation and of wealth sufficient to leave them free for public affairs. So far as such persons are to be found in the country, for some are to be sought abroad, they are to be found in a few great cities.

There is no class with a hereditary prescription to public office, no great families whose names are known to the people, and who, bound together by class sympathy and ties of relationship, help one another by keeping offices in the hands of their own members.

The country is a very large one, and has its political capital in a city without trade, without manufactures, without professional careers. Even the seats of State governments are often placed in comparatively small towns.[1] Hence a man cannot carry on his gainful occupation at the same time that he attends to "Inner Circle" politics.

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[1] Rome in the later days of the republic had practically become a country, that is to say, the range of her authority and the mass of her public business were much greater than in any of the Greek cities, even in Athens in the days of Pericles.

[2] Norway, the most democratic of the monarchical countries of Europe, is the one which has probably the smallest class of persons continuously occupied with politics.

Members of Congress and of State legislatures are invariably chosen from the places where they reside. Hence a person belonging to the leisured class of a great city cannot get into the House of Representatives or the legislature of his State except as member for a district of his own city.

The shortness of terms of office, and the large number of offices filled by election, make elections very frequent. All these elections, with trifling exceptions, are fought on party lines, and the result of a minor one for some petty local office, such as county treasurer, affects one for a more important post, *e.g.* that of member of Congress. Hence constant vigilance, constant exertions on the spot, are needed. The list of voters must be incessantly looked after, newly-admitted or newly-settled citizens enrolled, the active local men frequently consulted and kept in good humour, meetings arranged for, tickets (*i.e.* lists of candidates) for all vacant offices agreed upon. One election is no sooner over than another approaches and has to be provided for, as the English sporting man reckons his year by "events," and thinks of Newmarket after Ascot, and of Goodwood after Newmarket.

Now what do these conditions amount to? To this—A great deal of hard and dull election and other local political work to be done. Few men of leisure to do it, and still fewer men of leisure likely to care for it. Nobody able to do it in addition to his regular business or profession. Little motive for anybody, whether leisured or not, to do the humbler and local parts of it (*i.e.* so much as concerns the minor elections), the parts which bring neither fame nor power.

If the work is to be done at all, some inducement, other than fame or power, must clearly be found. Why not, some one will say, the sense of public duty? I will speak of public duty presently: meantime let it suffice to remark that to rely on public duty as the main motive power in politics is to assume a commonwealth of angels. Men such as we know them must have some other inducement. Even in the Christian Church there are other than spiritual motives to lead its pastors to spiritual work; nor do all poets write because they seek to express the passion of their souls. In America we discover a palpable inducement to undertake the dull and toilsome work of election politics. It is the inducement of places in the public service. To make them attractive they must be paid. They are paid, nearly all of them, memberships of Congress[1] and other Federal places, State places (including memberships of State legislatures), city and county places. Here then is the inducement, the remuneration for political work performed in the way of organizing and electioneering. Now add that besides the paid administrative and legislative places which a democracy bestows by election, judicial places are also in most of the States elective, and held for terms of years only; and add further, that the holders of nearly all those administrative places, Federal, State, and municipal, which are not held for a fixed term, are liable to be dismissed, and have been hitherto in practice dismissed, whenever power changes from one party to another,[2] so that those who belong to the party out of office have a direct chance of office when their party comes in. The inducement to undertake political work we have been searching for is at once seen to be adequate, and only too adequate. The men for the work are certain to appear because remuneration is provided. Politics has now become a gainful profession, like advocacy, stockbroking, the dry goods trade, or the getting up of companies. People go into it to live by it, primarily for the sake of the salaries attached to the places they count on getting, secondarily in view of the opportunities it affords of making incidental and sometimes illegitimate gains. Every person in a high administrative post, whether Federal, State, or municipal, and, above all, every member of Congress, has opportunities of rendering services to wealthy individuals and companies for which they are willing to pay secretly in money or in money's worth. The better officials and legislators—they are the great majority, except in large cities—resist the temptation. The worst succumb to it, and the prospect of these illicit profits renders a political career distinctly more attractive to an unscrupulous man.[1]

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[1] *E.g.* The seat of Government for Maryland is Annapolis, not Baltimore; for Ohio, Columbus, not Cincinnati; for Illinois, Springfield, not Chicago; for California, Sacramento, not San Francisco; for Washington Territory, Olympia, not Seattle or Walla Walla; for Louisiana, Baton Rouge, not New Orleans.

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[1] Though, as observed in a previous chapter, the payment of members of Congress does not seem to have any marked effect in lowering the type of members. It is the offices rather than legislative posts that sustain the professional class.

[2] I am speaking of the practice up to within the last few years. It has been slightly modified lately in consequence of the progress of the civil service reform movement.

We find therefore that in America all the conditions exist for producing a class of men specially devoted to political work and making a livelihood by it. It is work much of which cannot be done in combination with any other kind of regular work, whether professional or commercial. Even if the man who unites wealth and leisure to high intellectual attainments were a frequent figure in America, he would not take to this work; he would rather be a philanthropist or cultivate arts and letters. It is work which, steadily pursued by an active man, offers an income. Hence a large number of persons are drawn into it, and make it the business of their life; and the fact that they are there as professionals has tended to keep amateurs out of it.

There are, however, two qualifications which must be added to this statement of the facts, and which it is best to add at once. One is that the mere pleasure of politics counts for something. Many people in America as well as in England undertake even the commonplace work of local canvassing and organizing for the sake of a little excitement, a little of the agreeable sense of self-importance, or from that fondness for doing something in association with others which makes a man become secretary to a cricket club or treasurer of a fund raised by subscription for some purpose he may not really care for. And the second qualification is that pecuniary motives operate with less force in rural districts than in cities, because in the former the income obtainable by public office is too small to induce men to work long in the hope of getting it. Let it therefore be understood that what is said in this chapter refers primarily to cities, and of course also to persons aiming at the higher Federal and State offices; and that I do not mean to deny that there is plenty of work done by amateurs as well as by professionals.

Having thus seen what are the causes which produce professional politicians, we may return to inquire how large this class is, compared with the corresponding class in the free countries of Europe, whom we have called the Inner Circle.

In America the Inner Circle, that is to say, the persons who make political work the chief business of their lives,[1] includes :—

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[1] As to the extent to which corruption prevails, see *post*, Chapter LXVII.

Firstly. All members of both Houses of Congress.

Secondly. All Federal office-holders except the judges, who are irremovable, and who have sometimes taken no prominent part in politics.

Thirdly. A large part of the members of State legislatures. How large a part, it is impossible to determine, for it varies greatly from State to State. I should guess that in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, Maryland, and Louisiana, half the members were professional politicians ; in Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Texas, less than half ; in Massachusetts, Vermont, Georgia, Kentucky, Iowa, Oregon, not more than one-fourth ; in some other States, perhaps even less. But the line between a professional and non-professional politician is too indefinite to make any satisfactory estimate possible.

Fourthly. Nearly all State office-holders, excluding all judges in a few States, and many of the judges in the rest.

Fifthly. Nearly all holders of paid offices in the greater and in many of the smaller cities, and many holders of paid offices in the counties. There are, however, great differences in this respect between different States, the New England States and the newer States of the North-west, as well as some Southern States, choosing many of their county officials from men who are not regularly employed on politics, although members of the dominant party.

Sixthly. A large number of people who hold no office but want to get one. This category includes, of course, many of the "workers" of the party which does not command the majority for the time being, in State and municipal affairs, and which has not, through the President, the patronage of Federal posts. It also includes many expectants belonging to the party for the time being dominant, who are earning their future places by serving the party in the meantime.[2]

All the above may fairly be called professional or Inner Circle politicians, but of their number I can form no estimate, save that it must be counted by hundreds of thousands, inasmuch as it practically includes nearly all office-holders and most expectants of public office.[1]

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[1] Of course I do not mean the business of their whole lives, for men change their occupation frequently and lightly in America, but their chief business for the time being.

[2] But, as already observed, there are also in the rural districts and smaller towns many workers and expectants who do not look for places.

It must be remembered that the "work" of politics means in America the business of winning elections, and that this work is incomparably heavier and more complex than in England, because:—

(1) The voters are a larger proportion of the population; (2) The government is more complex (Federal, State, and local) and the places filled by election are therefore far more numerous; (3) Elections come at shorter intervals; (4) The machinery of nominating candidates is far more complete and intricate; (5) The methods of fighting elections are far more highly developed, *i.e.* they are matters requiring more technical knowledge and skill; (6) Ordinary private citizens do less election work, because they are busier than in England, and the professionals exist to do it for them.

I have observed that there are also plenty of men engaged in some trade or profession who interest themselves in politics and work for their party without any definite hope of office or other pecuniary aim. They correspond to what we have called the Outer Circle politicians of Europe. It is hard to draw a line between the two classes, because they shade off into one another,

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[1] The Inner Circle may in England be roughly taken to include:—

Members of the House of Lords, say	100
Members of the House of Commons	670
Editors, managers, and chief writers on leading newspapers, say	280
Expectant candidates for House of Commons, say	450
Persons who in each constituency devote most of their time to politics, *e.g.* secretaries of political associations, registration agents, etc., say	2000
	3500

Comparatively few newspapers are primarily political, and in many constituencies (*e.g.* Irish and Highland counties) there are very few persons occupied in political work. I do not, therefore, think this estimate too low.

In the United States there are stated to be now about 120,000 Federal offices. Allowing one expectant for each office (a small allowance), and assuming the State and local offices bestowed as the reward for political services to be equal in number to Federal offices (they are, of course, far more numerous), and allowing one expectant to each such office, we should have a total of 120,000 × 4 = 480,000. Deducting from this total those who, though they work for office, do not make such work their main business, and those who work with no special eye to office, we should still have a very large total, probably over 200,000, of persons whose chief occupation and livelihood lies in politics.

there being many farmers or lawyers or saloon-keepers, for instance, who, while pursuing their regular calling, bear a hand in politics, and look to be some time or other rewarded for doing so. When this expectation becomes a considerable part of the motive for exertion, such an one may fairly be called a professional, at least for the time being, for although he has other means of livelihood, he is apt to be impregnated with the habits and sentiments of the professional class.

The proportion between Outer Circle and Inner Circle men is in the United States a sort of ozonometer by which the purity and healthiness of the political atmosphere may be tested. Looking at the North only, for I have no tolerable data as to the South, and excluding congressmen, the proportion of men who exert themselves in politics without pecuniary motive is largest in New England, in the country parts of New York, in Northern Ohio, and the North-western States, while the professional politicians most abound in the great cities—New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, San Francisco. This is because these cities have the largest masses of ignorant voters, and also because their municipal governments, handling large revenues, offer the largest facilities for illicit gains.

I shall presently return to the Outer Circle men. Meantime let us examine the professionals somewhat more closely; and begin with those of the humbler type, whose eye is fixed on a municipal or other local office, and seldom ranges so high as a seat in Congress.

This species, like the weeds which follow human dwellings, thrives best in cities, and even in the most crowded parts of cities. It is known to the Americans as the "ward politician," because the city ward is the chief sphere of its activity, and the ward meeting the first scene of its triumphs. A statesman of this type usually begins as a saloon or bar-keeper, an occupation which enables him to form a large circle of acquaintances, especially among the "loafer" class who have votes but no reason for using them one way more than another, and whose interest in political issues is therefore as limited as their stock of political knowledge. But he may have started as a lawyer of the lowest kind, or lodging-house keeper, or have taken to politics after failure in store-keeping. The education of this class is only that of the elementary schools: if they have come after boyhood from

Europe, it is not even that. They have of course no comprehension of political questions or zeal for political principles; politics mean to them merely a scramble for places. They are usually vulgar, sometimes brutal, more rarely criminal, or at least the associates of criminals. They it is who move about the populous quarters of the great cities, form groups through whom they can reach and control the ignorant voter, pack meetings with their creatures.

Their methods and their triumphs must be reserved for a later chapter. Those of them who are Irish, an appreciable proportion in three or four great cities, have seldom Irish patriotism to redeem the mercenary quality of their politics. They are too strictly practical for that, being regardful of the wrongs of Ireland only so far as these furnish capital to be used with Irish voters. Their most conspicuous virtues are shrewdness, a sort of rough good-fellowship with one another, and loyalty to their chiefs, from whom they expect promotion in the ranks of the service. The plant thrives in the soil of any party, but its growth is more vigorous in whichever party is for the time dominant in a given city.

English critics, taking their cue from American pessimists, have often described these men as specimens of the whole class of politicians. This is misleading. The men are bad enough both as an actual force and as a symptom. But they are confined to a few great cities, those eight or nine I have already mentioned; it is their exploits there, and particularly in New York, where the mass of ignorant immigrants is largest, that have made them famous.

In the smaller cities, and in the country generally, the minor politicians are mostly native Americans, less ignorant and more respectable than these last-mentioned street vultures. The bar-keeping element is represented among them, but the bulk are petty lawyers, officials, Federal as well as State and county, and people who for want of a better occupation have turned office-seekers, with a fair sprinkling of store-keepers, farmers, and newspaper men. The great majority have some regular avocation, so that they are by no means wholly professionals. Law is of course the business which best fits in with politics. They are not below the level of the class to which they belong, which is what would be called in England the lower middle, or in France the *petite bourgeoisie*, and they often suppose themselves to be fighting for Republican or Democratic principles, even though in fact concerned chiefly with place hunting. It is not so much positive moral defects that are to be charged on them as a slightly sordid and selfish view of politics and a laxity in the use of electioneering methods.

These two classes do the local work and dirty work of politics. They are the rank and file. Above them stand the officers in the political army, the party managers, including the members of Congress and chief men in the State legislatures, and the editors of influential newspapers. Some of these have pushed their way up from the humbler ranks. Others are men of superior ability and education, often college graduates, lawyers who have had practice, less frequently merchants or manufacturers who have slipped into politics from business. There are all sorts among them, creatures clean and unclean, as in the sheet of St. Peter's vision, but that one may say of politicians in all countries. What characterizes them as compared with the corresponding class in Europe is that their whole time is more frequently given to political work, that most of them draw an income from politics and the rest hope to do so, that they come more largely from the poorer and less cultivated than from the higher ranks of society, and that they include but few men who have pursued any of those economical, social, or constitutional studies which form the basis of politics and legislation, although many are proficients in the arts of popular oratory, of electioneering, and of party management.

They show a high average level of practical cleverness and versatility, and a good deal of legal knowledge. They are usually correct in life, for intoxication as well as sexual immorality is condemned by American more severely than by European opinion, but are often charged with a low tone, with laxity in pecuniary matters, with a propensity to commit or to excuse jobs, with a deficient sense of the dignity which public office confers and the responsibility it implies. I shall elsewhere discuss the validity of these charges, and need only observe here that even if the last thirty years have furnished some grounds for accusing the class as a whole, there are many brilliant exceptions, many leading politicians whose honour is as stainless and patriotism as pure as that of the best European statesmen. In this general description I am simply repeating what non-political Americans themselves say. It is possible that with their half-humorous tendency to exaggerate they dwell too much on the darker side of their public life. My own belief is that things are healthier than the newspapers and common talk lead a traveller to believe, and that the blackness of the worst men in the large cities has been allowed to darken the whole class of politicians as the smoke from a few factories will darken the sky over a whole town. However, the sentiment I have described is no doubt the general sentiment. "Politician" is a term of reproach, not merely among the "superfine philosophers" of New England colleges, but among the better sort of citizens over the whole Union. "How did such a job come to be perpetrated?" I remember once asking a casual acquaintance who had been pointing out some scandalous waste of public money. "Why, what can you expect from the politicians?" was the surprised answer.

Assuming these faults to exist, to what causes are they to be ascribed? Granted that politics has to become a gainful profession, may it not still be practised with as much integrity as other professions? Do not the higher qualities of intellect, the ripe fruits of experience and study, win for a man ascendency here as in Europe? Does not the suspicion of dishonour blight his influence with a public which is itself at least as morally exacting as that of any European country? These are questions which can be better answered when the methods of party management have been described, the qualities they evoke appreciated, their reaction on men's character understood.

It remains to speak of the non-professional or Outer Circle politicians, those who work for their party without desiring office. These men were numerous and zealous shortly before and during the Civil War, when the great questions of the exclusion of slavery from the Territories and the preservation of the Union kindled the enthusiasm of the noblest spirits of the North, women as well as men. No country ever produced loftier types of dauntless courage and uncompromising devotion to principle than William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow-workers in the Abolitionist cause. Office came to Abraham Lincoln, but he would have served his party just as earnestly if there had been no office to reward him.[1] Nor was there any want of high souled patriotism in the South. The people gave their blood freely, and among the leaders there were many who offered up fine characters as well as brilliant talents on an altar which all but themselves deemed unhallowed. When these great issues were finally settled, and the generation whose manhood they filled began to pass away, there was less motive for ordinary citizens to trouble themselves about public affairs. Hence the professional politicians had the field left free; and as they were ready to take the troublesome work of organizing, the ordinary citizen was contented to be superseded, and thought he did enough when he went to the poll for his party. Still there are districts where a good deal of unpaid and disinterested political work is done. In some parts of New England, New York, and Ohio, for instance, citizens of position bestir themselves to rescue the control of local elections from the ward politicians. In the main, however, the action of the Outer Circle consists in voting, and this the ordinary citizen does more steadily and intelligently than anywhere in Europe, unless perhaps in Switzerland. Doubtless much of the work which Outer Circle politicians do in Europe is in America done by professionals. But that lively interest in politics which the English Outer Circle feels, and which is not felt by the English public generally, is in America felt by almost the whole of the nation, that is to say, by the immense majority of native white Americans, and even by the better sort of immigrants, or, in other words, the American Outer Circle comes far nearer to including the whole nation than does the Outer Circle of England. Thus the influence which counterworks that of professionals is the influence of public opinion expressing itself constantly through its countless voices in the press, and more distinctly at frequent intervals by the ballot-box.

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[1] Lincoln was never a professional politician, for he continued to practise as a lawyer till he became President: but he was so useful to his party that for some years before 1860 he had been obliged to spend great part of his time in political work, and probably some would have called him a professional.

CHAPTER LVIII

WHY THE BEST MEN DO NOT GO INTO POLITICS

"BUT," some one will say, who has read the reasons just assigned for the development of a class of professional politicians, "you allow nothing for public spirit. It is easy to show why the prize of numerous places should breed a swarm of office-seekers, not so easy to understand why the office-seekers should be allowed to have this arena of public life in a vast country, a free country, an intelligent country, all to themselves. There ought to be patriotic citizens ready to plunge into the stream and save the boat from drifting towards the rapids. They would surely have the support of the mass of the people who must desire honest and economical administration. If such citizens stand aloof, there are but two explanations possible. Either public life must be so foul that good men cannot enter it, or good men must be sadly wanting in patriotism."

This kind of observation is so common in European mouths as to need an explicit answer. The answer is two-fold.

In the first place, the arena is not wholly left to the professionals. Both the Federal and the State legislatures contain a fair proportion of upright and disinterested men, who enter chiefly, or largely, from a sense of public duty, and whose presence keeps the mere professionals in order. So does public opinion, deterring even the bad men from the tricks to which they are prone, and often driving them, when detected in a serious offence, from place and power.

However, this first answer is not a complete answer, for it must be admitted that the proportion of men of intellectual and social eminence who enter public life is smaller in America than it has been during the present century in each of the free countries of Europe. Does this fact indicate a want of public spirit?

It is much to be wished that in every country public spirit were the chief motive propelling men into public life. But is it so anywhere now? Has it been so at any time in a nation's history? Let any one in England, dropping for the moment that self-righteous attitude of which Englishmen are commonly accused by foreigners, ask himself how many of those whom he knows as mixing in the public life of his own country have entered it from motives primarily patriotic, how many have been actuated by the love of fame or power, the hope of advancing their social pretensions or their business relations. There is nothing necessarily wrong in such forms of ambition; but if we find that they count for much in the public life of one country, and for comparatively little in the public life of another, we must expect to find the latter able to reckon among its statesmen fewer persons of eminent intelligence and energy.

Now there are several conditions present in the United States, conditions both constitutional and social, conditions independent either of political morality or of patriotism, which make the ablest citizens less disposed to enter political life than they would otherwise be, or than persons of the same class are in Europe. I have already referred to some of these, but recapitulate them shortly here because they are specially important in this connection.

The want of a social and commercial capital is such a cause. To be a Federal politician you must live in Washington, that is, abandon your circle of home friends, your profession or business, your local public duties. But to live in Paris or London is of itself an attraction to many Englishmen and Frenchmen.

There is no class in America to which public political life comes naturally, as it still does to a certain class in England; no families with a sort of hereditary right to serve the state. Nobody can get an early and easy start on the strength of his name and connections, as still happens in several European countries.

In Britain or France a man seeking to enter the higher walks of public life has more than five hundred seats for which he may stand. If his own town or county is impossible he goes elsewhere. In the United States he cannot. If his own district is already filled by a member of his own party, there is nothing to be done, unless he will condescend to undermine and supplant at the next nominating convention the sitting member. If he has been elected and happens to lose his own re-nomination or re-election, he cannot re-enter Congress by any other door. The fact that a man has served gives him no claim to be allowed to go on serving. In the West, rotation is the rule. No wonder that, when a political career is so precarious, men of worth and capacity hesitate to embrace it. They cannot afford to be thrown out of their life's course by a mere accident.[1]

Politics are less interesting than in Europe. The two kinds of questions which most attract eager or ambitious minds, questions of foreign policy and of domestic constitutional change, are generally absent, happily absent. Currency and tariff questions and financial affairs generally, internal improvements, the regulation of railways and so forth, are important, no doubt, but to some minds not fascinating. How few people in the English or French legislatures have mastered them, or would relish political life if it dealt with little else! There are no class privileges or religious inequalities to be abolished. Religion, so powerful a political force in Europe, is outside politics altogether.

In most European countries there has been for many years past an upward pressure of the poorer or the unprivileged masses, a pressure which has seemed to threaten the wealthier and more particularly the landowning class. Hence members of the latter class have had a strong motive for keeping tight hold of the helm of state. They have felt a direct personal interest in sitting in the legislature and controlling the administration of their country. This has not been so in America. Its great political issues have not been class issues. On the contrary there has been so great and general a sense of economic security, whether well or ill founded I do not now inquire, that the wealthy and educated have been content to leave the active work of politics alone.

The division of legislative authority between the Federal Congress and the legislatures of the States further lessens the interest and narrows the opportunities of a political career. Some of the most useful members of the English Parliament have been led to enter it by their zeal for philanthropic schemes and social reforms. Others enter because they are interested in foreign politics or in commercial questions. In the United States foreign politics and commercial questions belong to Congress, so no one will be led by them to enter the legislature of his State. Social reforms and philanthropic enterprises belong to the State legislatures, so no one will be led by them to enter Congress. The limited sphere of each body deprives it of the services of many active spirits who would have been attracted by it had it dealt with both these sets of matters, or with the particular set of matters in which their own particular interest happens to lie.

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[1] The tendency in Switzerland to re-elect the same men to the legislature and to public office has doubtless worked as much for good in politics there as the opposite tendency works for evil in the United States. Men who have supported measures which their constituency disapproves are often re-elected because they are thought honest and capable. The existence of the *referendum* facilitates this.

In America there are more easy and attractive openings into other careers than in most European countries. The settlement of the great West, the making and financing of railways, the starting of industrial or mercantile enterprises in the newer States, all offer a tempting field to ambition, ingenuity, and self-confidence. A man without capital or friends has a better chance than in Europe, and as the scale of undertakings is vaster, the prizes are more seductive. Hence much of the practical ability which in the Old World goes to Parliamentary politics or to the civil administration of the state, goes in America into business, especially into railways and finance. No class strikes one more by its splendid practical capacity than the class of railroad men. It includes administrative rulers, generals, diplomatists, financiers, of the finest gifts. And in point of fact (as will be more fully shown later) the railroad kings have of late years swayed the fortunes of American citizens more than the politicians.

The fascination which politics have for many people in England is largely a social fascination. Those who belong by birth to the upper classes like to support their position in county society by belonging to the House of Commons, or by procuring either a seat in the House of Lords, or the lord-lieutenancy of their county, or perhaps a post in the royal household. The easiest path to these latter dignities lies through the Commons. Those who spring from the middle class expect to find by means of politics an entrance into a more fashionable society than they have hitherto frequented. Their wives will at least be invited to the party receptions, or they may entertain a party chieftain when he comes to address a meeting in their town. Such inducements scarcely exist in America. A congressman, a State governor, a city mayor, gains nothing socially by his position. There is indeed, except in a few Eastern cities with exclusive sets, really nothing in the nature of a social prize set before social ambition, while the career of political ambition is even in those cities wholly disjoined from social success. The only exception to this rule occurs in Washington, where a senator or cabinet minister enjoys *ex officio* a certain social rank.[1]

None of these causes is discreditable to America, yet, taken together, they go far to account for the large development of the professional element among politicians. Putting the thing broadly, one may say that in America, while politics are relatively less interesting than in Europe and lead to less, other careers are relatively more interesting and lead to more.[2]

It may however be alleged that I have omitted one significant ground for the distaste of "the best people" for public life, viz. the bad company they would have to keep, the general vulgarity of tone in politics, the exposure to invective or ribaldry by hostile speakers and a reckless press.

I omit this ground because it seems insignificant. In every country a politician has to associate with men whom he despises and distrusts, and those whom he most despises and distrusts are sometimes those whose so-called social rank is highest—the sons or nephews of great nobles. In every country he is exposed to misrepresentation and abuse, and the most galling misrepresentations are not the coarse and incredible ones, but those which have a semblance of probability, which delicately discolour his motives and ingeniously pervert his words. A statesman must soon learn, even in decorous England or punctilious France or polished Italy, to disregard all this, and rely upon his conscience for his peace of mind, and upon his conduct for the respect of his countrymen. If he can do so in England or France or Italy, he may do so in America also. No more there than in Europe has any upright man been written down, for though the American press is unsparing, the American people are shrewd, and sometimes believe too little rather than too much evil of a man whom the press assails. Although therefore one hears the pseudo-European American complain of newspaper violence, and allege that it keeps him and his friends from doing their duty by their country, I could not learn the name of any able and high-minded man of whom it could be truly said that through this cause his gifts and virtues had been reserved for private life. The roughness of politics has, no doubt, some influence on the view which wealthy Americans take of a public career, but these are just the Americans who think that European politics are worked, to use the common phrase, "with kid gloves," and they are not the class most inclined anyhow to come to the front for the service of the nation. Without denying that there is recklessness in the American press, and a want of refinement in politics generally, I do not believe that these phenomena have anything like the importance which European visitors are taught, and willingly learn, to attribute to them. Far more weight is to be laid upon the difficulties which the organization of the party system, to be described in the following chapters, throws in the way of men who seek to enter public life. There is, as we shall see, much that is disagreeable, much that is even humiliating, in the initial stages of a political career, and doubtless many a pilgrim turns back after a short experience of this Slough of Despond.

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[1] It is the same in some, though by no means in all, of the cantons of Switzerland. Office carries little or no social consideration with it. In some cantons the old families have so completely withdrawn or become so completely shut out from public office, federal or cantonal, that it would be assumed that a politician was necessarily a plebeian. I remember to have been told in Bern of a foreign diplomatist who, walking one day with one of the old patricians of the city, stopped at the door of the Government offices. "Where are you going?" asked the patrician. "To see one of your ministers on business." "You don't mean that you are going to speak to one of that *canaille!*" was the reply. The minister was, as Swiss statesmen generally are, a perfectly respectable man; but to a Bernese Junker his being a minister was enough to condemn him.

[2] This is true even of eminence in letters or art. A great writer or eloquent preacher is relatively more honoured and valued in America than in England.

To explain the causes which keep so much of the finest intellect of the country away from national business is one thing, to deny the unfortunate results would be quite another. Unfortunate they certainly are. But the downward tendency observable since the end of the Civil War seems to have been arrested. When the war was over, the Union saved, and the curse of slavery gone for ever, there came a season of contentment and of lassitude. A nation which had surmounted such dangers seemed to have nothing more to fear. Those who had fought with tongue and pen and rifle, might now rest on their laurels. After long-continued strain and effort, the wearied nerve and muscle sought repose. It was repose from political warfare only. For the end of the war coincided with the opening of a time of swift material growth and abounding material prosperity, in which industry and the development of the West absorbed more and more of the energy of the people. Hence a neglect of the details of politics such as had never been seen before. The last few years have brought a revival of interest in public affairs, and especially in the management of cities. There is more speaking and writing and thinking, practical and definite thinking, upon the principles of government than at any previous epoch. Good citizens are beginning to put their hands to the machinery of government; and it is noticed than those who do so are, more largely than formerly, young men, who have not contracted the bad habits which the practice of politics has engendered among many of their elders, and who will in a few years have become an even more potent force than they are now. If the path to Congress and the State legislatures and the higher municipal offices were cleared of the stumbling-blocks and dirt heaps which now encumber it, cunningly placed there by the professional politicians, a great change would soon pass upon the composition of legislative bodies, and a new spirit be felt in the management of State and municipal as well as of national affairs.

CHAPTER LIX

PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

THE Americans are, to use their favourite expression, a highly executive people, with a greater ingenuity in inventing means, and a greater promptitude in adapting means to an end, than any European race. Nowhere are large undertakings organized so skilfully; nowhere is there so much order with so much complexity; nowhere such quickness in correcting a suddenly discovered defect, in supplying a suddenly arisen demand.

Government by popular vote, both local and national, is older in America than in continental Europe. It is far more complete than even in England. It deals with larger masses of men. Its methods have engaged a greater share of attention, enlisted more ingenuity and skill in their service, than anywhere else in the world. They have therefore become more elaborate and, so far as mere mechanism goes, more perfect than elsewhere.

The greatest discovery ever made in the art of war was when men began to perceive that organization and discipline count for more than numbers. This discovery gave the Spartan infantry a long career of victory in Greece, and the Swiss infantry a not less brilliant renown in the later Middle Ages. The Americans made a similar discovery in politics some fifty or sixty years ago. By degrees, for even in America great truths do not burst full-grown upon the world, it was perceived that the victories of the ballot-box, no less than of the sword, must be won by the cohesion and disciplined docility of the troops, and that these merits can only be secured by skilful organization and long-continued training. Both parties flung themselves into the task, and the result has been an extremely complicated system of party machinery, firm yet flexible, delicate yet quickly set up and capable of working well in the roughest communities.

Strong necessity, long practice, and the fierce competition of the two great parties, have enabled this executive people to surpass itself in the sphere of electioneering politics. Yet the principles are so simple that it will be the narrator's fault if they are not understood.

One preliminary word upon the object of a party organization. To a European politician, by which I mean one who knows politics but does not know America, the aims of a party organization, be it local or general, seem to be four in number—

Union—to keep the party together and prevent it from wasting its strength by dissensions and schisms.
Recruiting—to bring in new voters, *e.g.* immigrants when they obtain citizenship, young men as they reach the age of suffrage, new-comers, or residents hitherto indifferent or hostile.
Enthusiasm—to excite the voters by the sympathy of numbers, and the sense of a common purpose, rousing them by speeches or literature.
Instruction—to give the voters some knowledge of the political issues they have to decide, to inform them of the virtues of their leaders, and the crimes of their opponents.

These aims, or at least the first three of them, are pursued by the party organizations of America with eminent success. But they are less important than a fifth object which has been little regarded in Europe, though in America it is the mainspring of the whole mechanism. This is the selection of party candidates; and it is important not only because the elective places are so numerous, far more numerous than in any European country, but because they are tenable for short terms, so that elections frequently recur. Since the parties, having of late had no really distinctive principles, and therefore no well-defined aims in the direction of legislation or administration, exist practically for the sake of filling certain offices, and carrying on the machinery of government, the choice of those members of the party whom the party is to reward, and who are to strengthen it by the winning of the offices, becomes a main end of its being.

There are three ways by which in self-governing countries candidates may be brought before electors. One is by the candidate's offering himself, appealing to his fellow-citizens on the strength of his personal merits, or family connections, or wealth, or local influence. This was a common practice in most English constituencies till our own time; and seems to be the practice over parliamentary Europe still. Another is for a group or junto of men influential in the constituency to put a candidate forward, intriguing secretly for him or openly recommending him to the electors. This also largely prevailed in England, where in counties four or five of the chief landowners used to agree as to the one of themselves who should stand for the county; or chose the eldest son of a duke or marquis as the person whom his rank designated.[1] So in Scotch boroughs a little knot of active bailies and other citizens combined to bring out a candidate, but generally kept their action secret, for "the clique" was always a term of reproach. The practice is common in France now, where the committees of each party recommend a candidate.

The third system is that in which the candidate is chosen neither by himself nor by the self-elected group, but by the people themselves, *i.e.* by the members of a party, whether assembled in mass or acting through representatives chosen for the purpose. This plan offers several advantages. It promises to secure a good candidate, because presumably the people will choose a suitable man. It encourages the candidate, by giving him the weight of party support, and therefore tends to induce good men to come forward. It secures the union of the party, because a previous vote has determined that the candidate is the man whom the majority prefer, and the minority are therefore likely, having had their say and been fairly outvoted, to fall into line and support him. This is the system which now prevails from Maine to California, and is indeed the keystone of transatlantic politics. But there is a further reason for it than those I have mentioned.

That no American dreams of offering himself for a post unless he has been chosen by the party[2] is due not to the fact that few persons have the local pre-eminence which the social conditions of Europe bestow on the leading landowners of a neighbourhood, or on some great merchants or employers in a town, nor again to the modesty which makes an English candidate delay presenting himself as a candidate for Parliament until he has got up a requisition to himself to stand, but to the notion that the popular mind and will are and must be all in all, that the people must not only create the office-bearer by their votes, but even designate the persons for whom votes may be given. For a man to put himself before the voters is deemed presumptuous, because an encroachment on their right to say whom they will even so much as consider. The theory of popular sovereignty requires that the ruling majority must name its own standard-bearers and servants, the candidates, must define its own platform, must in every way express its own mind and will. Were it to leave these matters to the initiative of candidates offering themselves, or candidates put forward by an unauthorized clique, it would subject itself to them, would be passive instead of active, would cease to be worshipped as the source of power. A system for selecting candidates is therefore not a mere contrivance for preventing party dissensions, but an essential feature of matured democracy.

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[1] Thus in Mr. Disraeli's novel of *Tancred* the county member, a man of good birth and large estates, offers to retire in order to make room for the eldest son of the Duke when he comes of age.

[2] It may sometimes, though rarely, be a schismatic or recalcitrant section of the party, as will be seen hereafter.

It was not however till democracy came to maturity that the system was perfected. As far back as the middle of last century it was the custom in Massachusetts, and probably in other colonies, for a coterie of leading citizens to put forward candidates for the offices of the town or colony, and their nominations, although clothed with no authority but that of the individuals making them, were generally accepted. This lasted on after the Revolution, for the structure of society still retained a certain aristocratic quality. Clubs sprang up which, especially in New York State, became the organs of groups and parties, brought out candidates, and conducted election campaigns; while in New England the clergy and the men of substance continued to act as leaders. Presently, as the democratic spirit grew, and people would no longer acquiesce in self-appointed chiefs, the legislatures began to be recognized as the bodies to make nominations for the higher Federal and State offices. Each party in Congress nominated the candidate to be run for the presidency. each party in a State legislature the candidate for governor, and often for other places also. This lasted during the first two or three decades of the present century, till the electoral suffrage began to be generally lowered, and a generation which had imbibed Jeffersonian principles had come to manhood, a generation so filled with the spirit of democratic equality that it would recognize neither the natural leaders whom social position and superior intelligence indicated, nor the official leadership of legislative bodies. As party struggles grew more bitter, a party organization became necessary, which better satisfied the claims of petty local leaders, which knit the voters in each district together and concentrated their efforts, while it expressed the absolute equality of all voters, and the right of each to share in determining his candidate and his party platform. The building up of this new organization was completed for the Democratic party about the year 1835, for the Whig party not till some years later. When the Republican party arose about 1854, it reproduced so closely, or developed on lines so similar, the methods which experience had approved, that the differences between the systems of the two great parties are now unimportant, and may be disregarded in the sketch I have to give.[1]

The essential feature of the system is that it is from bottom to top strictly representative. This is because it has power, and power can flow only from the people. An organization which exists, like the political associations of England, solely or mainly for the sake of canvassing, conducting registration, diffusing literature, getting up courses of lectures, holding meetings and passing resolutions, has little or no power. Its object is to excite, or to persuade, or to manage such business as the defective registration system of the country leaves to be fulfilled by voluntary agencies. So too in America the committees or leagues which undertake to create or stimulate opinion have no power, and need not be strictly representative. But when an organization which the party is in the habit of obeying, chooses a party candidate, it exerts power, power often of the highest import, because it practically narrows the choice of a party, that is, of about a half of the people, to one particular person out of the many for whom they might be inclined to vote.[2]

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[1] What makes it hard to present a perfectly accurate and yet concise description is that these are variations between the arrangements in cities and those in rural districts, as well as between the arrangements in different States.

[2] The rapid change in the practice of England in this point is a curious symptom of the progress of democratic ideas and usages there. As late as the general elections of 1868 and 1874, nearly all candidates offered themselves to the electors, though some professed to do so in pursuance of requisitions emanating from the electors. In 1880 many—I think most—Liberal candidates

Such power would not be yielded to any but a representative body, and it is yielded to the bodies I shall describe because they are, at least in theory, representative.

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in boroughs, and some in counties, were chosen by the local party associations, and appealed to the Liberal electors on the ground of having been so chosen. In 1885 nearly all new candidates were so chosen, and a man offering himself against the nominee of the association was denounced as an interloper and traitor to the party. The same process has been going on in the Tory party, though more slowly.

CHAPTER LX

THE MACHINE

The organization of an American party consists of two distinct, but intimately connected, sets of bodies, the one permanent, the other temporary. The function of the one is to manage party business, of the other to nominate party candidates.

The first of these is a system of managing committees. In some States every election district has such a committee, whose functions cover the political work of the district. Thus in country places there is a township committee, in cities a ward committee. There is a committee for every city, for every district, and for every county. In other States it is only the larger areas, cities, counties, and congressional or State Assembly districts that have committees. There is, of course, a committee for each State, with a general supervision of such political work as has to be done in the State as a whole. There is a national committee for the political business of the party in the Union as a whole, and especially for the presidential contest.[1] The whole country is covered by this network of committees, each with a sphere of action corresponding to some constituency or local election area, so that the proper function of a city committee, for instance, is to attend to elections for city offices, of a ward committee to elections for ward offices, of a district committee to elections for district offices. Of course the city committee, while supervising the general conduct of city elections, looks to each ward organization to give special attention to the elections in its own ward; and the State committee will in State elections expect similar help from, and be entitled to issue directions to, all bodies acting for the minor areas—districts, counties, townships, cities, and wards—comprised in the State. The smaller local committees are in fact autonomous for their special local purposes, but subordinate in so far as they serve the larger purposes common to the whole party. The ordinary business of these committees is to raise and apply funds for election purposes and for political agitation generally, to organize meetings when necessary, to disseminate political tracts and other information, to look after the press, to attend to the admission of immigrants as citizens and their enrolment on the party lists.[1] At election times they have also to superintend the canvass, to procure and distribute tickets at the polls, to allot money for various election services; but they are often aided, or virtually superseded, in this work by "campaign committees" specially created for the occasion. Finally, they have to convoke at the proper times those nominating assemblies which form the other parallel but distinct half of the party organization.

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[1] Within the State Committees and National Committee there is a small Executive Committee which practically does most of the work and exercises most of the power.

These committees are permanent bodies, that is to say, they are always in existence and capable of being called into activity at short notice. They are re-appointed annually by the Primary (hereinafter mentioned) or Convention for their local area, as the case may be, and of course their composition may be completely changed on a re-appointment. In practice it is but little changed, the same men continuing to serve year after year, because they hold the strings in their hands, because they know most and care most about the party business. In particular, the chairman is apt to be practically a permanent official, and (if the committee be one for a populous area) a powerful and important official, who has large sums to disburse and quite an army of workers under his orders. The chairmanship of the organizing committee of the county and city of New York (these areas being the same), for instance, is a post of great responsibility and influence, in which high executive gifts find a worthy sphere for their exercise.

One function and one only is beyond the competence of these committees—the choice of candidates. That belongs to the other and parallel division of the party organization, the nominating assemblies.

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[1] In many States a person who has resided for a certain specified period may vote even though he has not been naturalized as a citizen.

The business of registration is, I think, in all States undertaken by the public authority for the locality, instead of being, as in England, partially left to the action of the individual citizen or of the parties.

Every election district, by which I mean every local area or constituency which chooses a person for any office,[1] has a party meeting to select the party candidate for that office. This is called Nominating. If the district is not subdivided, *i.e.* does not contain any lesser districts, its meeting is called a Primary. A primary has two duties. One is to select the candidates for its own local district offices. Thus in the country a township primary[2] nominates the candidates for township offices, in a city a ward primary nominates those for ward offices (if any). The other duty is to elect delegates to the nominating meetings of larger areas, such as the county or congressional district in which the township is situate, or the city to which the ward belongs. The primary is composed of all the party voters resident within the bounds of the township or ward. They are not too numerous, for in practice the majority do not attend, to meet in one room, and they are assumed to be all alike interested. But as the party voters in such a large area as a county, congressional district, or city, are too numerous to be able to meet and deliberate in one room, they must act through representatives. The choice of candidates for office in such larger areas is therefore entrusted to a body called a Nominating Convention. It is a representative body composed of delegates from all the primaries within its limits, who have been chosen at those primaries for the sole purpose of sitting in the convention and there selecting the candidates.

Sometimes a convention of this kind has itself to choose delegates to proceed to a still higher convention for a larger area. The greatest of all nominating bodies, that which is called the National Convention and nominates the party candidate for the presidency, is entirely composed of delegates from other conventions, no primary being directly represented in it. As a rule, however, there are only two sets of nominating authorities, the primary which selects candidates for its own petty offices, the convention composed of the delegates from all the primaries in the local circumscriptions of the district for which the convention acts.

A primary, of course, sends delegates to a number of different conventions, because its area, let us say the township or ward, is included in a number of different election districts, each of which has its own convention. Thus the same primary will in a city choose delegates to at least the following conventions, and probably to one or two others.[1] (*a*) To the city convention, which nominates the mayor and other city officers. (*b*) To the Assembly district convention, which nominates candidates for the lower house of the State legislature. (*c*) To the senatorial district convention, which nominates candidates for the State Senate. (*d*) To the congressional district convention, which nominates candidates for Congress. (*e*) To the State convention, which nominates candidates for the governorship and other State offices. Sometimes, however, the nominating body for an Assembly district is a primary and not a convention. In New York City the Assembly district is the unit, and each of the twenty-four has its primary.

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[1] Including under the term "office" the post of representative in any legislative assembly or municipal council.

[2] I take township and ward as examples, but in parts of the country where the township is not the unit of local government (see Chapter XLVIII. *ante*), the local unit, whatever it is, must be substituted.

This seems complex: but it is a reflection of the complexity of government, there being everywhere three authorities, Federal, State, and Local (this last further subdivided), covering the same ground, yet the two former quite independent of one another, and the third for many purposes distinct from the second.

The course of business is as follows:—A township or ward primary is summoned by the local party managing committee, who fix the hour and place of meeting, or if there be not such a committee, then by some permanent officer of the organization in manner prescribed by the bye-laws. A primary for a larger area is usually summoned by the county committee. If candidates have to be chosen for local offices, various names are submitted and either accepted without a division or put to the vote, the person who gets most votes being declared chosen to be the party candidate. He is said to have received the party nomination. The selection of delegates to the various conventions is conducted in the same way. The local committee has usually prepared beforehand a list of names of persons to be chosen to serve as delegates, but any voter present may bring forward other names. All names, if not accepted by general consent, are then voted on. At the close of the proceedings the chairman signs the list of delegates chosen to the approaching convention or conventions, if more than one, and adjourns the meeting *sine die*.

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[1] There may be also a county convention for county offices, and a judicial district convention for judgeships, but in a large city or county the county convention delegates may also be delegates to the congressional convention, perhaps also to the State assembly district and senatorial district conventions.

The delegates so chosen proceed in due course to their respective conventions, which are usually held a few days after the primaries, and a somewhat longer period before the elections for offices.[1] The convention is summoned by the managing committee for the district it exists for, and when a sufficient number of delegates are present, some one proposes a temporary chairman, or the delegate appointed for the purpose by the committee of the district for which the convention is being held "calls the meeting to order" as temporary chairman. This person names a Committee on Credentials, which forthwith examines the credentials presented by the delegates from the primaries, and admits those whom it deems duly accredited. Then a permanent chairman is proposed and placed in the chair, and the convention is held to be "organized," *i.e.* duly constituted. The managing committee have almost always arranged beforehand who shall be proposed as candidates for the party nominations, and their nominees are usually adopted. However, any delegate may propose any person he thinks fit, being a recognized member of the party, and carry him on a vote if he can. The person adopted by a majority of delegates' votes becomes the party candidate, and is said to have "received the nomination." The convention sometimes, but not always, also amuses itself by passing resolutions expressive of its political sentiments; or if it is a State convention or a National convention, it adopts a platform, touching on, rather than dealing with, the main questions of the day. It then, having fulfilled its mission, adjourns *sine die*, and the rest of the election business falls to the managing committee. It must be remembered that primaries and conventions, unlike the local party associations of England, are convoked but once, make their nominations, and vanish.[2] They are swans which sing their one song and die.

The national convention held every fourth year before a presidential election needs a fuller description, which I shall give presently. Meantime three features of the system just outlined may be adverted to.

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[1] In the case of elections to the Presidency and to the Governorship of a State the interval between the nominating convention and the election is much longer—in the former case about four months.

[2] It is true that according to what has been sometimes called the "Birmingham system," an English party council in a constituency is renewed every year by a fresh election in the wards. But such a "Three Hundred" is a body permanent during the year, and may be summoned to pass resolutions on some political question, or take such other action as it can.

Every voter belonging to the party in the local area for which the primary is held, is presumably entitled to appear and vote in it. In rural districts, where everybody knows everybody else, there is no difficulty about admission, for if a Democrat came into a Republican primary, or a Republican from North Adams tried to vote in the Republican primary of Lafayetteville, he would be recognized as an intruder and expelled. But in cities where people do not know their neighbours by headmark, it becomes necessary to have regular lists of the party voters entitled to a voice in the primary. These are made up by the local committee, which may exclude persons whom, though they call themselves Republicans (or Democrats, as the case may be), it deems not loyal members of the party. The usual test is, Did the claimant vote the party ticket at the last important election, generally the presidential election, or that for the State governorship? If he did not, he may be excluded. Frequently, however, the local rules of the party require every one admitted to the list of party voters to be admitted by the votes of the existing members, who may reject him at their pleasure, and also exact from each member two pledges, to obey the local committee, and to support the party nominations, the breach of either pledge being punishable by expulsion. In many primaries voters supposed to be disagreeably independent are kept out either by the votes of the existing members or by the application of these strict tests. Thus it happens that three-fourths or even four-fifths of the party voters in a primary area may not be on the list and entitled to raise their voice in the primary for the selection of candidates or delegates. Another regulation, restricting nominations to those who are enrolled members of the regular organization, makes persons so kept off the list ineligible as party candidates.

Every member of a nominating meeting, be it a primary or a convention of delegates, is deemed to be bound by the vote of the majority to support the candidate whom the majority select, whether or no an express pledge to that effect has been given. And in the case of a convention a delegate is generally held to bind those whom he represents, *i.e.* the voters at the primary which sent him. Of course no compulsion is possible, but long usage and an idea of fair play have created a sentiment of honour (so-called) and party loyalty strong enough, with most people and in all but extreme cases, to secure for the party candidate the support of the whole party organization in the district.[1] It is felt that the party must be kept together, and that he who has come into the nominating meeting hoping to carry his own candidate ought to obey the decision of the majority. The vote of a majority has a sacredness in America not yet reached in Europe.

As respects the freedom left to delegates to vote at their own pleasure or under the instructions of their primary, and to vote individually or as a solid body, the practice is not uniform. Sometimes they are sent up to the nominating convention without instructions, even without the obligation to "go solid." Sometimes they are expressly directed, or it is distinctly understood by them and by the primary, that they are to support the claims of a particular person to be selected as candidate, or that they are at any rate to vote altogether for one person. Occasionally they are even given a list arranged in order of preference, and told to vote for A. B., failing him for C. D., failing him for E. F., these being persons whose names have already been mentioned as probable candidates for the nomination. This, however, would only happen in the case of the greater offices, such as those of member of Congress or governor of a State. The point is in practice less important than it seems, because in most cases, whether there be any specific and avowed instruction or not, it is well settled beforehand by those who manage the choice of delegates what candidate any set of delegates are to support, or at least whose lead they are to follow in the nominating convention.

Note further how complex is the machinery needed to enable the party to concentrate its force in support of its candidates for all these places, and how large the number of persons constituting the machinery. Three sets of offices, municipal or county, State, Federal, have to be filled; three different sets of nominating bodies are therefore needed. If we add together all the members of all the conventions included in these three sets, the number of persons needed to serve as delegates will be found to reach a high total, even if some of them serve in more than one convention. Men whose time is valuable will refuse the post of delegate, gladly leaving to others who desire it the duty of selecting candidates for offices to which they seldom themselves aspire.

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[1] The obligation is however much less strict in the case of municipal elections than it is in Federal or State elections.

However, as we shall see, such men are but rarely permitted to become delegates, even when they desire the function.

"Why these tedious details?" the European reader may exclaim. "Of what consequence can they be compared to the Constitution and laws of the country?" Patience. These details have more significance and make more difference to the working of the government than many of the provisions of the Constitution itself. The mariner feels the trade winds which sweep over the surface of the Pacific and does not perceive the coral insects which are at work beneath its waves, but it is by the labour of these insects that islands grow, and reefs are built up on which ships perish.

CHAPTER LXI

WHAT THE MACHINE HAS TO DO

The system I have described is simple in principle, and would be simple in working if applied in a European country where elective offices are few. The complexity which makes it puzzle many Americans, and bewilder all Europeans, arises from the extraordinary number of elections to which it is applied, and from the way in which the conventions for different election districts cross and overlap one another. A few instances may serve to convey to the reader some impression of this profusion of elections and intricacy of nominating machinery.

In Europe a citizen rarely votes more than twice or thrice a year, sometimes less often, and usually for only one person at a time. Thus in England any householder, say at Manchester or Liverpool, votes once a year for a town councillor (if there is a contest); once in three years for members of a school board (if there is a contest); once in four or five years (on an average) for a member of the House of Commons.[1] Allowing for the frequent cases in which there is no municipal contest in his ward, he will not on an average vote more than one and a half times each year. It is much the same in Scotland, nor do elections seem to be more frequent in France, Germany, or Italy.

Now compare the elections held to fill offices in the great State of Ohio, which is fairly typical of the older western or middle States. Citizens vote at the polls for the following five sets of offices. For simplicity I take the case of a city instead of a rural district, but the number of elective offices is nearly the same in the latter.[2]

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[1] He may also vote once a year for guardians of the poor, but this office is usually so little sought that the election excites slight interest and comparatively few persons vote. The voting is by voting papers left at the voter's house for him to mark. If he goes to a vestry meeting he may, in places where there is a select vestry, vote for its members.

[2] I have compiled what follows from the *Ohio Voters' Manual*, by W. S Collins (Cleveland, Ohio, 1884).

I. FEDERAL OFFICES.—*Election held*:—*Once in every four years*—Electors of the President of the United States. *Once in every two years*—Members of the House of Representatives of the United States.

II. STATE OFFICES.—*Once in each year*—Member of the Board of Public Works (to serve for three years); Judge of the Supreme Court (to serve for five years). *Once in two years*—Governor of the State of Ohio; Lieutenant-Governor of Ohio; Secretary of State of Ohio; Treasurer of Ohio; Attorney-General of Ohio; State Senators (elected in each Senatorial district); Members of the State House of Representatives (elected in each Representative district). *Once in three years*—State Commissioner of Common Schools; Clerk of the Supreme Court. *Once in four years*—Auditor of the State.

III. DISTRICT OFFICES.—*Once in two years*—Circuit Judge (to serve for six years). *Once in five years*—Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (to serve for five years). *Once in ten years*—Member of the State Board of Equalization.

IV. COUNTY OFFICES.—*Once in each year*—County Commissioner (to serve for three years); Infirmary Directors (to serve for three years). *Once in two years*—County Treasurer; Sheriff; Coroner. *Once in three years*—County Auditor; Recorder; Surveyor; Judge of Probate; Clerk of Court of Common Pleas; Prosecuting Attorney.

V. CITY OFFICES.—*Once in each year*—Members of the Board of Police Commissioners (in most cities); Members of Board of Infirmary Directors (to serve for three years); Trustee of Water Works (to serve for three years). *Once in two years*—Mayor; City Clerk; Auditor (if any); Treasurer; Solicitor; Police Judge (in large cities); Prosecuting Attorney of the Police Court (in large cities); Clerk of Police Court (in large cities); City Commissioner (in cities of the second class); Marshal (not in the largest cities); Street Commissioner; Civil Engineer (if elected at the polls);[1] Fire Surveyor (if elected at the polls);[1] Superintendent of Markets (if elected at the polls).[1]

I have omitted from the above list—

All offices to which the council of a city appoints, because these are not conferred by popular election.

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[1] The city council has power to determine whether these officers shall be appointed by them or elected at the polls.

All unpaid elective offices, although many of these furnish opportunities for gain and influence.[1]

All offices which are found only in one or both of the two great cities of Cincinnati and Cleveland.

This list shows a total of *seven* elections at the polls taking place annually, *twenty-one* to *twenty-six* (according to circumstances) taking place biennially, *eight* taking place triennially, *two* quadrennially, *one* quinquennially, *one* decennially,—giving an average in round numbers of twenty-two elections in each year. Of course this does not mean that there are twenty-two separate and distinct elections, for many of the State offices are filled up at one and the same election, as also most of the city offices at one and the same election. It means that there are, on an average, twenty-two different paid offices[2] which a voter has annually to allot by his vote—that is to say, he must in each and every year make up his mind as to the qualifications of twenty-two different persons or sets of persons to fill certain offices. As nearly all these offices are contested on political lines, though the respective principles (if any) of Republicans and Democrats have no more to do with the discharge of the duties of the State and local offices than the respective principles of Methodists and Baptists, nominations to them are made by the respective party organizations. Candidates for all, or nearly all, the above offices are nominated in conventions composed of delegates from primaries. I cannot give the precise number of conventions, but there must be at least seven or eight, although one or two of these will not be held every year. As the areas with their respective conventions overlap, the same primary will in each year send different sets of delegates to as many different nominating conventions, six or seven at least, as there are sets of offices to be filled up in that year. The number and names of the elective offices differ in different States of the Union, but the general features of the system are similar.

Let us now take another illustration from Massachusetts, and regard the system from another side by observing how many sets of delegates a primary will have to send to the several nominating conventions which cover the local area to which the primary belongs.[1]

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[1] The ward offices are omitted from the above list, because they are usually unpaid, and the township offices because they represent in the rural districts what the ward offices are in the towns. The candidates for ward and township offices are nominated in primaries.

[2] If the unpaid offices were included, the average would rise to about twenty-five, and some of these offices (*e.g.* that of Alderman) are fought on political lines because they give influence and patronage. The text therefore understates the case. In some cities the office of alderman is paid, in most it is much sought after.

A Massachusetts primary will choose the following sets of persons, including committee-men, candidates, and delegates :—-

1. Ward and city committees in cities, and town committees in towns.[2]
2. In cities, candidates for common council ; in towns, candidates for town offices, *i.e.* selectmen, school committee, overseers of poor, town clerk and treasurer, assessors of taxes, etc.
3. In cities, delegates to a convention to nominate city officers.
4. Delegates to a convention to nominate county officers.
5. Candidates for representatives to State legislature, or delegates to a convention to nominate the same.
6. Delegates to a convention for nominating candidates for State Senate.
7. Delegates to a convention for nominating candidates for State Governor's council.
8. Delegates to a convention for nominating candidates for State offices (*e.g.* Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, etc.)

The above are annual. Then every two years—

9. Delegates to a congressional district convention for nominating candidates for representatives to Congress.

Then every four years—

10. Delegates to a district convention for nominating other delegates (corresponding to the members of Congress) to the national Presidential Convention of the party ; and
11. Delegates to a general convention for nominating four delegates at large (corresponding to United States senators) to national Presidential Convention.[3]

In New York City there are usually from one hundred and sixty to two hundred candidates to be voted for at the November elections, even when the year is not one of those when presidential electors are chosen ; and all these have been nominated at primaries or conventions. But I need not weary the reader with further examples, for the facts above stated are fairly illustrative of what goes on over the whole Union.

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[1] I owe the following list, and the explanatory note at the end of the volume to the kindness of a friend in Massachusetts (Mr. G. Bradford of Cambridge), who has given much attention to the political methods of his country.

[2] A "town" in New England is the unit of local government corresponding to the township of the Middle and Western States. It is a rural not an urban area. See Chapter XLVIII. *ante.*

[3] See further the note to this chapter in Appendix to this volume on the managing and nominating party organizations of Massachusetts.

It is hard to keep one's head through this mazy whirl of offices, elections, and nominating conventions. In America itself one finds few ordinary citizens who can state the details of the system, though these are of course familiar to professional politicians.

The first thing that strikes a European who contemplates this organization is the great mass of work it has to do. In Ohio, for instance, there are, if we count in such unpaid offices as are important in the eyes of politicians, on an average some thirty offices to be filled annually by election. Primaries or conventions have to select candidates for all of these. Managing committees have to organize the primaries, "run" the conventions, conduct the elections. Here is ample occupation for a class of professional men.

What are the results which one may expect this abundance of offices and elections to produce?

The number of delegates needed being large, since there are so many conventions, it will be hard to find an adequate number of men of any mark or superior intelligence to act as delegates. The bulk will be persons unlikely to possess, still more unlikely to exercise, a careful or independent judgment. The functions of delegate being in the case of most conventions humble and uninteresting, because the offices are unattractive to good men, persons whose time is valuable will not, even if they do exist in sufficient numbers, seek it. Hence the best citizens, *i.e.* the men of position and intelligence, will leave the field open to inferior persons who have any private or personal reason for desiring to become delegates. I do not mean to imply that there is necessarily any evil in this as regards most of the offices, but mention the fact to explain why few men of good social position think of the office of delegate, except to the National Convention once in four years, as one of trust or honour.

The number of places to be filled by election being very large, ordinary citizens will find it hard to form an opinion as to the men best qualified for the offices. Their minds will be distracted among the multiplicity of places. In large cities particularly, where people know little about their neighbours, the names of most candidates will be unknown to them, and there will be no materials, except the recommendation of a party organization, available for determining the respective fitness of the candidates put forward by the several parties.

Most of the elected officials are poorly paid. Of those above enumerated in Ohio, none, not even the governor, receives more than $4000 (£800) a year, the majority very much less. The duties of most offices require no conspicuous ability, but can be discharged by any honest man of good sense and business habits. Hence they will not be sought by persons of ability and energy, because such persons can do better for themselves in private business; it will be hard to say which of many candidates is the best; the selection will rouse little stir among the people at large.

Those who have had experience of public meetings know that to make them go off well, it is as desirable to have the proceedings prearranged as it is to have a play rehearsed. You must select beforehand not only your chairman, but also your speakers. Your resolutions must be ready framed; you must be prepared to meet the case of an adverse resolution or hostile amendment. This is still more advisable where the meeting is intended to transact some business, instead of merely expressing its opinion; and when certain persons are to be selected for any duty, prearrangement becomes not merely convenient but indispensable in the interests of the meeting itself, and of the business which it has to despatch. "Does not prearrangement practically curtail the freedom of the meeting?" Certainly it does. But the alternative is confusion and a hasty unconsidered decision. Crowds need to be led; if you do not lead them they will go astray, will follow the most plausible speaker, will break into fractions and accomplish nothing. Hence if a primary is to discharge properly its function of selecting candidates for office or a number of delegates to a nominating convention, it is necessary to have a list of candidates or delegates settled beforehand. And for the reasons already given, the more numerous the offices and the delegates, and the less important the duties they have to discharge, so much the more necessary is it to have such lists settled; and so much the more likely to be accepted by those present is the list proposed.

The reasons have already been stated which make the list of candidates put forth by a primary or by a nominating convention carry great weight with the voters. They are the chosen standard-bearers of the party. A European may remark that the citizens are not bound by the nomination; they may still vote for whom they will. If a bad candidate is nominated, he may be passed over. That is easy enough where, as in England, there are only one or two offices to be filled at an election, where these few offices are important enough to excite general interest, and where therefore the candidates are likely to be men of mark. But in America the offices are numerous, they are mostly unimportant, and the candidates are usually obscure. Accordingly guidance is eagerly welcomed, and the party as a whole votes for the person who receives the party nomination from the organization authorized to express the party view. Hence the high importance attached to "getting the nomination"; hence the care bestowed on constructing the nominating machinery; hence the need for prearranging the lists of delegates to be submitted to the primary, and of candidates to come before the convention.

I have sought in these chapters firstly to state how the nominating machine is constituted, and what work it has to do, then to suggest some of the consequences which the quantity and nature of that work may be expected to entail. We may now go on to see how the work turns out in practice to be done.

CHAPTER LXII

HOW THE MACHINE WORKS

Nothing seems fairer or more conformable to the genius of democratic institutions than the system I have described, whereby the choice of party candidates for office is vested in the mass of the party itself. The existence of a method which selects the candidate likely to command the greatest support prevents the dissension and consequent waste of strength which the appearance of rival candidates of the same party involves; while the popular character of that method excludes the dictation of a clique, and recognizes the sovereignty of the people. It is a method simple, uniform, and agreeable throughout to its leading principle.

To understand how it actually works one must distinguish between two kinds of constituencies or voting areas. One kind is to be found in the great cities—places whose population exceeds, speaking roughly, 100,000 souls, of which there are more than thirty in the Union. The other kind includes constituencies in small cities and rural districts. What I have to say will refer chiefly to the Northern States—*i.e.* the former Free States, because the phenomena of the Southern States are still exceptional, owing to the vast population of ignorant negroes, among whom the whites, or rather the better sort of whites, still stand as an aristocracy.

The tests by which one may try the results of the system of selecting candidates are two. Is the choice of candidates for office really free—*i.e.* does it represent the unbiassed wish and mind of the voters generally? Are the offices filled by good men, men of probity and capacity sufficient for the duties?

In the country generally, *i.e.* in the rural districts and small cities, both these tests are tolerably well satisfied. It is true that many of the voters do not attend the primaries. The selection of delegates and candidates is left to be made by that section of the population which chiefly interests itself in politics; and in this section local attorneys and office-seekers have much influence. The persons who seek the post of delegate, as well as those who seek office, are seldom the most energetic and intelligent citizens; but that is because these men have something better to do. An observer from Europe who looks to see men of rank and culture holding the same place in State and local government as they do in England, especially rural England, or in Italy, or even in parts of rural France and Switzerland (one cannot explain these things except by comparisons), will be disappointed. But democracies must be democratic. Equality will have its perfect work; and you cannot expect citizens who are pervaded by its spirit to go cap in hand to their richer neighbours begging them to act as delegates, or city or county officials, or congressmen. This much may be said, that although there is in America no difference of rank in the European sense, superior wealth or intelligence does not prejudice a man's candidature, and in most places improves its chances. If such men are not commonly chosen, it is for the same reason which makes them comparatively scarce among the town-councillors of English municipalities.

In these primaries and conventions the business is always prearranged—that is to say, the local party committee come prepared with their list of delegates or candidates. This list is usually, but not invariably, accepted, or if serious opposition appears, alterations may be made to disarm it and preserve the unity of the party. The delegates and candidates chosen are generally the members of the local committee, their friends or creatures. Except in very small places, they are rarely the best men. But neither are they the worst. In moderately-sized communities men's characters are known and the presence of a bad man in office brings on his fellow-citizens evils which they are not too numerous to feel individually. Hence tolerable nominations are made, the general sentiment of the locality is not outraged; and although the nominating machinery is worked rather in the name of the people than by the people, the people are willing to have it so, knowing that they can interfere if necessary to prevent serious harm.

In large cities the results are different because the circumstances are different. We find there, besides the conditions previously enumerated, viz. numerous offices, frequent elections. universal suffrage, an absence of stimulating issues, three others of great moment—

A vast population of ignorant immigrants.

The leading men all intensely occupied with business.

Communities so large that people know little of one another, and that the interest of each individual in good government is comparatively small.

Any one can see how these conditions affect the problem. The immigrants vote, that is, they obtain votes after three or four years' residence at most, and often less, but they are not fit for the suffrage.[1] They know nothing of the institutions of the country, of its statesmen, of its political issues. Neither from Germany nor from Ireland do they bring much knowledge of the methods of free government, and from Ireland they bring a suspicion of all government. Incompetent to give an intelligent vote, but soon finding that their vote has a value, they fall into the hands of the party organizations, whose officers enrol them in their lists, and undertake to fetch them to the polls. I was taken to watch the process of admitting to citizenship in New York. Droves of squalid men, who looked as if they had just emerged from an emigrant ship, and had perhaps done so only a few weeks before, for the law prescribing a certain term of residence is frequently violated, were brought up to a magistrate by the ward agent of the party which had captured them, declared their allegiance to the United States, and were forthwith placed on the roll. Such a sacrifice of common sense to abstract principles has seldom been made by any country. Nobody pretends that such persons are fit for civic duty, or will be dangerous if kept for a time in pupilage, but neither party will incur the odium of proposing to exclude them. The real reason for admitting them, besides democratic theory, was that the party which ruled New York expected to gain their votes.[2] It is an afterthought to argue that they will sooner become good citizens by being immediately made full citizens. A stranger must not presume to say that the Americans have been imprudent, but he may doubt whether the possible ultimate gain compensates the direct and certain danger.

In these great transatlantic cities, population is far less settled and permanent than in the cities of Europe. In New York,

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[1] Federal law prescribes a residence of five years as the pre-requisite for naturalization, but the term which enables a vote to be acquired is often shorter under State laws.

[2] At one time a speedy admission to citizenship was adopted as an inducement to immigrants; but this motive has ceased to have force in most States.

Brooklyn, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, a very small part of the inhabitants are natives of the city, or have resided in it for twenty years. Hence they know but little of one another, or even of those who would in Europe be called the leading men. There are scarcely any old families, families associated with the city,[1] whose name recommends one of their scions to the confidence of his fellow-citizens. There are few persons who have had any chance of becoming generally known, except through their wealth; and the wealthy have neither time nor taste for political work. Political work is a bigger and heavier affair than in small communities: hence ordinary citizens cannot attend to it in addition to their regular business. Moreover, the population is so large that an individual citizen feels himself a drop in the ocean. His power of affecting public affairs by his own intervention seems insignificant. His pecuniary loss through overtaxation, or jobbery, or malversation, is trivial in comparison with the trouble of trying to prevent such evils.

As party machinery is in great cities most easily perverted, so the temptation to pervert it is there strongest, because the prizes are great. The offices are well paid, the patronage is large, the opportunities for jobs, commissions on contracts, pickings, and even stealings, are enormous. Hence it is well worth the while of unscrupulous men to gain control of the machinery by which these prizes may be won.[2]

Such men, the professional politicians of the great cities, have two objects in view. One is to seize the local city and county offices. A great city of course controls the county in which it is situate. The other is so to command the local party vote as to make good terms with the party managers of the State, and get from them a share in State offices, together with such legislation as is desired from the State legislature, and similarly to make good terms with the Federal party managers, thus securing a share in Federal offices, and the means of influencing legislation in Congress. How do the city professionals move towards these objects?

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[1] In New York and Boston a few such families still exist, but their members do not often enter "politics."

[2] Although what is here stated is generally true of Machines in large cities, there may be, even in such cities, districts inhabited by well-to-do people, in which the political organizations, being composed of men of good character and standing, are honestly worked. The so-called "brownstone districts" in New York City have, I believe, good Machines.

There are two stages in an election campaign. The first is to nominate the candidates you desire: the second to carry them at the polls. The first of these is often the more important, because in many cities the party majority inclines so decidedly one way or the other (*e.g.* New York City is steadily Democratic, Philadelphia Republican), that nomination is in the case of the dominant party equivalent to election. Now to nominate your candidates you must, above all things, secure the primaries. They require and deserve unsparing exertion, for everything turns upon them.

The first thing is to have the kind of primary you want. Now the composition of a primary is determined by the roll or "check list," as it is called, of ward voters entitled to appear in it. This is prepared by the managing committee of the ward, who are naturally desirous to have on it only such men as they can trust or control. They are aided in securing this by the rules requiring members to be admitted by the votes of those already on the list, and exacting from persons admitted a pledge to obey the committee, and abide by the party nominations.[1] Men of independent temper often refuse this pledge, and are excluded. Many of the ward voters do not apply for admission. Of those who do apply and take the pledge, some can be plausibly rejected by the primary on the ground that they have on some recent occasion failed to vote the party ticket. Thus it is easy for an active committee to obtain a subservient primary, composed of persons in sympathy with it or obedient to it. In point of fact the rolls of membership of many primaries are largely bogus rolls. Names of former members are kept on when these men have left the district or died: names are put on of men who do not belong to the district at all, and both sets of names are so much "voting stock," applicable at the will and needs of the local party managers, who can admit the latter to vote, and recognize men personating the former. In fact, their control of the lists enables them to have practically whatever primary they desire.[1]

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[1] The rules of the Tammany Hall (Democratic) organization in New York City have, for many years past, made the consent of a majority of the members of each primary necessary to the admission of a new member. A similar system seems to have been adopted by the Republican party in that city. "The organization of the twenty-four Republican primaries (one for each Assembly district) is as complicated, and the access to membership as difficult, as that of any private club. The name of the applicant must be posted on a bulletin, and there stand until the next monthly meeting before it can even go to the committee on admissions. If favourably reported, it must yet gain a majority of those present at a monthly meeting of the primary; a result quite problematical, if the pliant obedience of the candidate is not made clear, or if he is not a member of the faction, or the follower of the boss dominant in his primary; and his application must be to the primary of his district. If he secures a majority he must yet not only take in substance the old Tammany pledge, 'to obey all orders of the general committee' (whose action is secret), and 'to support all nominations approved by that committee,' but he must also bind himself not to join any organization which does not recognize the authority of the primary association he seeks to join! This is of course intended to prevent all movements for reform. If elected, he may at any time be expelled by a majority of the members at any meeting of the association, if he is held to have violated any of those pledges. After an expulsion he can get back only by a vote of the primary. Such is the liberty of a member. The servile conditions of membership have repelled the better class of citizens."—Mr. D. B. Eaton, in *Amer. Cyclop. of Polit. Science*, art. "Primary Elections." The Republicans have, however, within the last four years reformed this system.

The next thing is to get the delegates chosen whom you wish for. The committee when it summons the primary settles in secret conclave the names of the delegates to be proposed, of course selecting men it can trust, particularly office-holders bound to the party which has put them in, and "workers" whom the prospect of office will keep faithful. When the meeting assembles a chairman is suggested by the committee and usually accepted. Then the list of delegates, which the committee has brought down cut and dry, is put forward. If the meeting is entirely composed of professionals, office-holders, and their friends, it is accepted without debate. If opponents are present, they may propose other names, but the official majority is almost always sufficient to carry the official list, and the chairman is prepared to exert, in favour of his friends, his power of ruling points of order. In extreme cases a disturbance will be got up, in the midst of which the chairman may plausibly declare the official list carried, or the meeting is adjourned in the hope that the opposition will not be at the trouble of coming next time, a hope likely to be realized, if the opposition consists of respectable citizens who dislike spending an evening in such company. Sometimes the professionals will bring in roughs from other districts to shout down opponents, and if necessary threaten them with violence. One way or another the "official" or committee's list of delegates is almost invariably carried.

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[1] In 1880 it was computed that out of 58,000 Republican voters in New York City not more than 6000, or 8000 at most, were members of the Republican organization, and entitled to vote in a primary.

The numbers present in a primary are sometimes very small. "At the last Republican primaries in New York City only 8 per cent of the Republican electors took part. In only eight out of twenty-four districts did the percentage exceed 10, in some it was as low as 2 per cent. In the Twenty-first Assembly District Tammany Primary, 116 delegates, to choose an Assembly candidate, were elected by less than fifty voters. In the Sixth Assembly District County Democracy Primary, less than 7 per cent of the Democratic voters took part, and of those who did, sixty-nine in number, nearly one-fourth were election officers. The primary was held in a careless way in a saloon while card-playing was going on." —Mr. A. C. Bernheim in *Pol. Science Quarterly* for March 1888.

The scene now shifts to the Nominating Convention, which is also summoned by the appropriate committee. When it is "called to order" a temporary chairman is installed, the importance of whose position consists in his having (usually) the naming of a committee on credentials, or contested seats, which examines the titles of the delegates from the various primaries to vote in the convention. Being himself in the interest of the professionals, he names a committee in their interest, and this committee does what it can to exclude delegates who are suspected of an intention to oppose the candidates whom the professionals have prearranged. The primaries have almost always been so carefully packed, and so skilfully "run," that a majority of trusty delegates has been secured; but sometimes a few primaries have sent delegates belonging to another faction of the party, or to some independent section of the party, and then there may be trouble. Occasionally two sets of delegates appear, each claiming to represent their primary. The dispute generally ends by the exclusion of the Independents or of the hostile faction, the committee discovering a flaw in their credentials, but sometimes, though rarely, the case is so clear that they must be admitted. In doubtful cases a partisan chairman is valuable, for, as it is expressed, "he is a solid 8 to 7 man all the time." When the credentials have been examined the convention is deemed to be duly organized, a permanent chairman is appointed, and the business of nominating candidates proceeds. A spokesman of the professionals proposes A. B. in a speech, dwelling on his services to the party. If the convention has been properly packed, he is nominated by acclamation. If there be a rival faction represented, or if independent citizens who dislike him have been sent up by some primary which the professionals have failed to secure, another candidate is proposed and a vote taken. Here also there is often room for a partial chairman to influence the result; here, as in the primary, a tumult or a hocus pocus may in extreme cases be got up to enable the chairman to decide in favour of his allies.

Americans are, however, so well versed in the rules which govern public meetings, and so prepared to encounter all sorts of tricks, that the managers do not consider success certain unless they have a majority behind them. This they almost certainly have; at least it reflects discredit on their handling of the primaries if they have not. The chief hope of an opposition therefore is not to carry its own candidate but so to frighten the professionals as to make them abandon theirs, and substitute some less objectionable name. The candidate chosen, who, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is the person predetermined by the managers, becomes the party nominee, entitled to the support of the whole party. He has received "the regular nomination." If there are other offices whereto nominations have to be made, the convention goes on to these, which being despatched, it adjourns and disappears for ever.

I once witnessed such a convention, a State convention, held at Rochester, N.Y., by the Democrats of New York State, at that time under the control of the Tammany Ring of New York City. The most prominent figure was the famous Mr. William M. Tweed, then in the zenith of his power. There was, however, little or nothing in the public proceedings from which an observer could learn anything of the subterranean forces at work. During the morning, a tremendous coming and going and chattering and clattering of crowds of men who looked at once sordid and flashy, faces shrewd but mean and sometimes brutal, vulgar figures in good coats forming into small groups and talking eagerly, and then dissolving to form fresh groups, a universal *camaraderie*, with no touch of friendship about it; something between a betting-ring and the flags outside the Liverpool Exchange. It reminded one of the swarming of bees in tree boughs, a ceaseless humming and buzzing which betokens immense excitement over proceedings which the bystander does not comprehend. After some hours all this settled down; the meeting was duly organized; speeches were made, all dull and thinly declamatory, except one by an eloquent Irishman; the candidates for State offices were proposed and carried by acclamation; and the business ended. Everything had evidently been prearranged; and the discontented, if any there were, had been talked over during the swarming hours.

After each of the greater conventions it is usual to hold one or more public gatherings, at which the candidates chosen are solemnly adopted by the crowd present, and rousing speeches are delivered. Such a gathering is called a "ratification" meeting. It has no practical importance, being of course attended only by those prepared to support the nominations made. The candidate is now launched, and what remains is to win the election.

The above may be thought, as it is thought by many Americans, a travesty of popular choice.[1] Observing the forms of consulting the voters, it substantially ignores them, and forces on them persons whom they do not know, and would dislike if they knew them. It substitutes for the party voters generally a small number of professionals and their creatures, extracts prearranged nominations from packed meetings, and calls this consulting the pleasure of the sovereign people.

Yet every feature of the Machine is the result of patent causes. The elective offices are so numerous that ordinary citizens cannot watch them, and cease to care who gets them. The conventions come so often that busy men cannot serve in them. The minor offices are so unattractive that able men do not stand for them. The primary lists are so contrived that only a fraction of the party get on them; and of this fraction many are too lazy or too busy or too careless to attend. The mass of the voters are ignorant; knowing nothing about the personal merits of the candidates, they are ready to follow their leaders like sheep. Even the better class, however they may grumble, are swayed by the inveterate habit of party loyalty, and prefer a bad candidate of their own party to a (probably no better) candidate of the other party. It is less trouble to put up with impure officials, costly city government, a jobbing State legislature, an inferior sort of congressman, than to sacrifice one's own business in the effort to set things right. Thus the Machine works on, and grinds out places, power, and opportunities for illicit gain to those who manage it.

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[1] Governor Cornell wrote in 1871 (being then chairman of the Republican State Committee) of the primaries of New York City, "The elections of delegates in nearly all of the districts were mere farces."

CHAPTER LXIII

RINGS AND BOSSES

THIS is the external aspect of the Machine; these the phenomena which a visitor taken round to see a number of Primaries and Nominating Conventions would record. But the reader will ask, How is the Machine run? What are the inner springs that move it? What is the source of the power the committees wield? What force of cohesion keeps leaders and followers together? What kind of government prevails among this army of professional politicians?

The source of power and the cohesive force is the desire for office, and for office as a means of gain. This one cause is sufficient to account for everything, when it acts, as it does in these cities, under the condition of the suffrage of a host of ignorant and pliable voters.

Those who in great cities form the committees and work the machine are persons whose chief aim in life is to make their living by office. Such a man generally begins by acquiring influence among a knot of voters who live in his neighbourhood, or work under the same employer, or frequent the same grog-shop or beer saloon, which perhaps he keeps himself. He becomes a member of his primary, attends regularly, attaches himself to some leader in that body, and is forward to render service by voting as his leader wishes, and by doing duty at elections. He has entered the large and active class called, technically, "workers," or more affectionately, "the Boys." Soon he becomes conspicuous in the primary, being recognized as controlling the votes of others—"owning them" is the technical term—and is chosen delegate to a convention. Loyalty to the party there and continued service at elections mark him out for further promotion. He is appointed to some petty office in one of the city departments, and presently is himself nominated for an elective office. By this time he has also found his way on to the ward committee, whence by degrees he rises to sit on the central committee, having carefully nursed his local connection and surrounded himself with a band of adherents, who are called his "heelers," and whose loyalty to him in the primary, secured by the hope of "something good," gives weight to his words. Once a member of the central committee he discovers what everybody who gets on in the world discovers sooner or later, by how few persons the world is governed. He is one of a small knot of persons who pull the wires for the whole city, controlling the primaries, selecting candidates, "running" conventions, organizing elections, treating on behalf of the party in the city with the leaders of the party in the State. Each of this knot, which is probably smaller than the committee, because every committee includes some ciphers put on to support a leader, and which may include one or two strong men not on the committee, has acquired in his upward course a knowledge of men and their weaknesses, a familiarity with the wheels, shafts, and bands of the party machine, together with a skill in working it. Each can command some primaries, each has attached to himself a group of dependants who owe some place to him, or hope for some place from him. The aim of the knot is not only to get good posts for themselves, but to rivet their yoke upon the city by garrisoning the departments with their own creatures, and so controlling elections to the State legislature that they can procure such statutes as they desire, and prevent the passing of statutes likely to expose or injure them. They cement their dominion by combination, each placing his influence at the disposal of the others, and settle all important measures in secret conclave.

Such a combination is called a Ring.

The power of such a combination is immense, for it ramifies over the whole city. There are, in New York City, for instance, over ten thousand persons employed by the city authorities, all dismissible by their superiors at short notice and without cause assigned. There are two thousand five hundred persons employed in the Custom-House, Post-Office, and other branches of the Federal service, most of whom are similarly dismissible by the proper Federal authority;[1] and there are also State servants, responsible to and dismissible by the State authority. If the same party happens to be supreme in city politics, in the Federal government, and in the State government, all this army of employés is expected to work for the party leaders of the city, in city primaries, conventions, and elections, and is virtually amenable to the orders of these leaders.[1] If the other party holds the reins of Federal government, or of both the Federal government and State government, then the city wirepullers have at any rate their own ten thousand or more, while other thousands swell the army of "workers" for the opposite party. Add those who expect to get offices, and it will be seen how great and how disciplined a force is available to garrison the city and how effective it becomes under strict discipline. Yet it is not larger than is needed, for the work is heavy. *Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*

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[1] Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, late one of the Federal Civil Service Commissioners, in article "Primary," in the *Amer. Cyclop. of Polit. Science.*

In a Ring there is usually some one person who holds more strings in his hand than do the others. Like them he has worked himself up to power from small beginnings, gradually extending the range of his influence over the mass of workers, and knitting close bonds with influential men outside as well as inside politics, perhaps with great financiers or railway magnates, whom he can oblige, and who can furnish him with funds. At length his superior skill, courage, and force of will make him, as such gifts always do make their possessor, dominant among his fellows. An army led by a council seldom conquers: it must have a commander-in-chief, who settles disputes, decides in emergencies, inspires fear or attachment. The head of the Ring is such a general. He dispenses places, rewards the loyal, punishes the mutinous, concocts schemes, negotiates treaties. He generally avoids publicity, preferring the substance to the pomp of power, and is all the more dangerous because he sits, like a spider, hidden in the midst of his web. He is a Boss.

Although the career I have sketched is that whereby most Bosses have risen to greatness, some attain it by a shorter path. There have been brilliant instances of persons stepping at once on to the higher rungs of the ladder in virtue of their audacity and energy, especially if coupled with oratorical power. The first theatre of such a man's successes may have been the stump rather than the primary: he will then become potent in conventions, and either by hectoring or by plausible address, for both have their value, spring into popular favour, and make himself necessary to the party managers. It is of course a gain to a Ring to have among them a man of popular gifts, because he helps to conceal the odious features of their rule, gilding it by his rhetoric, and winning the applause of the masses who stand outside the circle of workers. However, the position of the rhetorical boss is less firmly rooted than that of the intriguing boss, and there have been instances of his suddenly falling to rise no more.

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[1] Assuming, as one usually may, that the city leaders are on good terms with the Federal and State party managers.

A great city is the best soil for the growth of a Boss, because it contains the largest masses of manageable voters as well as numerous offices and plentiful opportunities for jobbing. But a whole State sometimes falls under the dominion of one intriguer. To govern so large a territory needs high abilities; and the State boss is always an able man, somewhat more of a politician, in the European sense, than a city boss need be. He dictates State nominations, and through his lieutenants controls State and sometimes Congressional conventions, being in diplomatic relations with the chief city bosses and local rings in different parts of the State. His power over them mainly springs from his influence with the Federal executive and in Congress. He is usually, almost necessarily, a member of Congress, probably a senator, and can procure, or at any rate can hinder, such legislation as the local leaders desire or dislike. The President cannot ignore him, and the President's ministers, however little they may like him, find it worth while to gratify him with Federal appointments for persons he recommends, because the local votes he controls may make all the difference to their own prospects of getting some day a nomination for the presidency. Thus he uses his Congressional position to secure State influence, and his State influence to strengthen his Federal position. Sometimes however he is rebuffed by the powers at Washington and then his State thanes fly from him. Sometimes he quarrels with a powerful city boss, and then honest men come by their own.

It must not be supposed that the members of Rings, or the great Boss himself, are wicked men. They are the offspring of a system. Their morality is that of their surroundings. They see a door open to wealth and power, and they walk in. The obligations of patriotism or duty to the public are not disregarded by them, for these obligations have never been present to their minds. A State boss is usually a native American and a person of some education, who avoids the grosser forms of corruption, though he has to wink at them when practised by his friends. He may be a man of personal integrity.[1] A city boss is often of foreign birth and humble origin; he has grown up in an atmosphere of oaths and cocktails: ideas of honour and purity are as strange to him as ideas about the nature of the currency and the incidence of taxation: politics is merely a means for getting and distributing places. "What," said an ingenuous delegate at one of the National Conventions at Chicago in 1880, "what are we here for except the offices?" It is no wonder if he helps himself from the city treasury and allows his minions to do so. Sometimes he does not rob, and, like Clive, wonders at his own moderation. And even he improves as he rises in the world. Like a tree growing out of a dust heap, the higher he gets, the cleaner do his boughs and leaves become. America is a country where vulgarity is scaled off more easily than in England, and where the general air of good nature softens the asperities of power. Some city bosses are men from whose decorous exterior and unobtrusive manners no one would divine either their sordid beginnings or their noxious trade. As for the State boss, whose talents are probably greater to begin with, he must be of very coarse metal if he does not take a polish from the society of Washington.

A city Ring works somewhat as follows. When the annual or biennial city or State elections come round, its members meet to discuss the apportionment of offices. Each may desire something for himself, unless indeed he is already fully provided for, and anyhow desires something for his friends. The common sort are provided for with small places in the gift of some official, down to the place of a policeman or doorkeeper or messenger, which is thought good enough for a common "ward worker." Better men receive clerkships or the promise of a place in the custom-house or post-office to be obtained from the Federal authorities. Men still more important aspire to the elective posts, seats in the State legislature, a city aldermanship or commissionership, perhaps even a seat in Congress. All the posts that will have to be filled at the coming elections are considered with the object of bringing out a party ticket, *i.e.* a list of candidates to be supported by the party at the polls when its various nominations have been successfully run through the proper conventions. Some leading man, or probably the Boss himself, sketches out an allotment of places; and when this allotment has been worked out fully, it results in a Slate, *i.e.* a complete draft list of candidates to be proposed for the various offices.[1] It may happen that the slate does not meet everybody's wishes. Some member of the ring or some local boss—most members of a ring are bosses each in his own district, as the members of a cabinet are heads of the departments of state, or as the cardinals are bishops of dioceses near Rome and priests and deacons of her parish churches—may complain that he and his friends have not been adequately provided for, and may demand more. In that case the slate will probably be modified a little to ensure good feeling and content; and will then be presented to the Convention.

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[1] So too a rural boss is often quite pure, and blameworthy rather for his intriguing methods than for his aims.

But there is sometimes a more serious difficulty to surmount. A party in a State or city may be divided into two or more factions. Success in the election will be possible only by uniting these factions upon the same nominees for office. Occasionally the factions may each make its list and then come together in the party convention to fight out their differences. But the more prudent course is for the chiefs of each faction to arrange matters in a private conference. Each comes wishing to get the most he can for his clansmen, but feels the need for a compromise. By a process of "dickering" (*i.e.* bargaining by way of barter), various offers and suggestions being made all round, a list is settled on which the high contracting parties agree. This is a Deal, or Trade, a treaty which terminates hostilities for the time, and brings about "harmony." The list so settled is now a Slate, unless some discontented magnate objects and threatens to withdraw. To do so is called "breaking the slate." If such a "sore-head" persists, a schism may follow, with horrible disaster to the party; but usually a new slate is prepared and finally agreed upon. The accepted Slate is now ready to be turned by the Machine into a Ticket, and nothing further remains but the comparatively easy process of getting the proper delegates chosen by packed primaries, and running the various parts of the ticket through the conventions to which the respective nominations belong. Internal dissension among the chiefs is the one great danger; the party must at all hazards be kept together, for the power of a united party is enormous. It has not only a large but a thoroughly trained and disciplined army in its office-holders and office-seekers; and it can concentrate its force upon any point where opposition is threatened to the regular party nominations.[1] All these office-holders and office-seekers have not only the spirit of self-interest to rouse them, but the bridle of fear to check any stirrings of independence. Discipline is very strict in this army. Even city politicians must have a moral code and moral standard. It is not the code of an ordinary unprofessional citizen. It does not forbid falsehood, or malversation, or ballot stuffing, or "repeating." But it denounces apathy or cowardice, disobedience, and above all, treason to the party. Its typical virtue is "solidity," unity of heart, mind, and effort among the workers, unquestioning loyalty to the party leaders, and devotion to the party ticket. He who takes his own course is a Kicker or Bolter; and is punished not only sternly but vindictively. The path of promotion is closed to him; he is turned out of the primary, and forbidden to hope for a delegacy to a convention; he is dismissed from any office he holds which the Ring can command. Dark stories are even told of a secret police which will pursue the culprit who has betrayed his party, and of mysterious disappearances of men whose testimony against the Ring was feared. Whether there is any foundation for such tales I do not undertake to say. But true it is that the bond between the party chiefs and their followers is very close and very seldom broken. What the client was to his patron at Rome, what the vassal was to his lord in the Middle Ages, that the heelers and workers are to their boss in these great transatlantic cities. They render a personal feudal service, which their suzerain repays with the gift of a livelihood; and the relation is all the more cordial because the lord bestows what costs him nothing, while the vassal feels that he can keep his post only by the favour of the lord.

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[1] A pleasant story is told of a former Boss of New York State, who sat with his vassals just before the convention, preparing the Slate. There were half a dozen or more State offices for which nominations were to be made. The names were with deliberation selected and set down, with the exception of the very unimportant place of State Prison Inspector. One of his subordinates ventured to call the attention of the Boss to what he supposed to be an inadvertence, and asked who was to be the man for that place, to which the great man answered, with an indulgent smile, "I guess we will leave *that* to the convention."

European readers must again be cautioned against drawing for themselves too dark a picture of the Boss. He is not a demon

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[1] As for instance by packing the primaries with its adherents from other districts, whom a partisan chairman or committee will suffer to be present and perhaps to vote.

He is not regarded with horror even by those "good citizens" who strive to shake off his yoke. He is not necessarily either corrupt or mendacious, though he grasps at plàce, power, and wealth. He is a leader to whom certain peculiar social and political conditions have given a character dissimilar from the party leaders whom Europe knows. It is worth while to point out in what the dissimilarity consists.

A Boss needs fewer showy gifts than a European demagogue. His special theatre is neither the halls of the legislature nor the platform, but the committee-room. A power of rough and ready repartee, or a turn for florid declamation, will help him; but he can dispense with both. What he needs are the arts of intrigue and that knowledge of men which teaches him when to bully, when to cajole, whom to attract by the hope of gain, whom by appeals to party loyalty. Nor are so-called "social gifts" unimportant. The lower sort of city politicians congregate in clubs and bar-rooms; and as much of the cohesive strength of the smaller party organizations arises from their being also social bodies, so also much of the power which liquor dealers exercise is due to the fact that "heelers" and "workers" spend their evenings in drinking places, and that meetings for political purposes are held there. Of the 1007 primaries and conventions of all parties held in New York City preparatory to the elections of 1884, 633 took place in liquor saloons. A Boss ought therefore to be hail fellow well met with those who frequent these places, not fastidious in his tastes, fond of a drink and willing to stand one, jovial in manners, and ready to oblige even a humble friend.

The aim of a Boss is not so much fame as power, and not so much power over the conduct of affairs as over persons. Patronage is the sort of power he seeks, patronage understood in the largest sense in which it covers the disposal of lucrative contracts and other modes of enrichment as well as salaried places. The dependants who surround him desire wealth, or at least a livelihood; his business is to find this for them, and in doing so he strengthens his own position.[1] It is as the bestower of riches that he holds his position, like the leader of a band of condottieri in the fifteenth century.

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[1] "A Boss is able to procure positions for many of his henchmen on horse-railroads, the elevated roads, quarry works, etc. Great corporations are peculiarly subject to the attacks of demagogues, and they find it greatly to their interest to be on good terms with the leader in each district who controls the vote of the assemblyman and alderman; and therefore the former is pretty sure that a letter of recommendation from him on behalf of any applicant for work will receive most favourable consideration The leader also is continually helping his

The interest of a Boss in political questions is usually quite secondary. Here and there one may be found who is a politician in the European sense, who, whether sincerely or not, purports and professes to be interested in some principle or measure affecting the welfare of the country. But the attachment of the ringster is usually given wholly to the concrete party, that is to the men who compose it, regarded as office-holders or office-seekers; and there is often not even a profession of zeal for any party doctrine. As a noted politician happily observed to a friend of mine, "You know, Mr. R., there are no politics in politics." Among bosses, therefore, there is little warmth of party spirit. The typical boss regards the boss of the other party much as counsel for the plaintiff regards counsel for the defendant. They are professionally opposed, but not necessarily personally hostile. Between bosses there need be no more enmity than results from the fact that the one has got what the other wishes to have. Accordingly it sometimes happens that there is a good understanding between the chiefs of opposite parties in cities; they will even go the length of making (of course secretly) a joint "deal," *i.e.* of arranging for a distribution of offices whereby some of the friends of one shall get places, the residue being left for the friends of the other. A well-organized city party has usually a disposable vote which can be so cast under the directions of the managers as to effect this, or any other desired result. The appearance of hostility must, of course, be maintained for the benefit of the public; but as it is for the interest of both parties to make and keep these private bargains, they are usually kept when made, though of course it is seldom possible to prove the fact.

The real hostility of the Boss is not to the opposite party, but to other factions within his own party. Often he has a rival leading some other organization, and demanding, in respect of the votes which that organization controls, a share of the good things going. The greatest cities can support more than one

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supporters out of difficulties, pecuniary and otherwise: he lends them a dollar now and then, helps out, when possible, such of their kinsmen as get into the clutches of the law, gets a hold over such of them as have done wrong and are afraid of being exposed, and learns to mix bullying judiciously with the rendering of service."—Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, in an article in the *Century* magazine for November 1886.

faction within the same party; thus New York had long three democratic organizations, two of which were powerful and often angrily hostile. If neither can crush the other, it finds itself obliged to treat, and to consent to lose part of the spoils to its rival. Still more bitter, however, is the hatred of Boss and Ring towards those members of the party who do not desire and are not to be appeased by a share of the spoils, but who agitate for what they call reform. They are natural and permanent enemies; nothing but the extinction of the Boss himself and of bossdom altogether will satisfy them. They are moreover the common enemies of both parties, that is, of bossdom in both parties. Hence in ring-governed cities professionals of both parties will sometimes unite against the reformers, or will rather let their opponents secure a place than win it for themselves by the help of the "independent vote." Devotion to "party government," as they understand it, can hardly go farther.

This great army of workers is mobilized for elections, the methods of which form a wide and instructive department of political science. Here I have to refer only to their financial side, because that is intimately connected with the Machine. Elections need money, in America a great deal of money. Where, then, does the money come from, seeing that the politicians themselves belong to, or emerge from, a needy class?

The revenues of a Ring, that is, their collective, or, as one may say, corporate revenues, available for party purposes, flow from five sources.

I. The first is public subscriptions. For important elections such as the biennial elections of State officers, or perhaps for that of the State legislature, a "campaign fund," as it is called, is raised by an appeal to wealthy members of the party. So strong is party feeling that many respond, even though they suspect the men who compose the Ring, disapprove its methods, and have no great liking for the candidates.

II. Contributions are sometimes privately obtained from rich men who, though not directly connected with the Ring, may expect something from its action. Contractors, for instance, have an interest in getting pieces of work from the city authorities. Railroad men have an interest in preventing State legislation hostile to their lines. Both, therefore, may be willing to help those who can so effectively help them. This source of income is only available for important elections. Its incidental mischief in enabling wealth to control a legislature through a Ring is serious.

III. An exceptionally audacious Ring will sometimes make an appropriation from the city or (more rarely) from the State treasury for the purposes not of the city or the State, but of its own election funds. It is not thought necessary to bring such an appropriation[1] into the regular accounts to be laid before the public; in fact, pains are taken to prevent the item from appearing, and the accounts have often to be manipulated for that purpose. The justification, if any, of conduct not authorized by the law, must be sought in precedent, in the belief that the other side would do the same, and in the benefits which the Ring expects to confer upon the city it administers It is a method of course available only when Ring officials have the control of the public funds, and cannot be resorted to by an opposition.

IV. A tax is levied upon the office-holders of the party, varying from one to four or even five per cent upon the amount of their annual salaries. The aggregate annual salaries of the city officials in New York City amount to $11,000,000 (£2,200,000 sterling), and those of the two thousand five hundred Federal officials, who, if of the same party, might also be required to contribute,[2] to $2,500,000 (£500,000 sterling). An assessment at two per cent on these amounts would produce over £45,000 and £10,000 respectively, quite a respectable sum for election expenses.[3] Even policemen in cities, even office boys, and workmen in Federal dockyards, have been assessed by their respective parties. As a tenant had in the days of feudalism to make occasional money payments to his lord in addition to the military service he rendered, so now the American vassal must render his aids in money as well as give knightly service at the primaries, in the canvass, at the polls. His liabilities are indeed heavier than those of the feudal tenant, for the latter could relieve himself from duty in the field by the payment of scutage, while under the Machine a money payment never discharges from the obligation to serve in the army of "workers." As in the days of the Anglo-Norman kings, forfeiture and the being proclaimed as "nithing" is the penalty for failure to discharge the duties by which the vassal holds. Efforts which began with an order issued by President Hayes in 1877 applying to Federal offices, have lately been made to prevent by administrative action and by legislation the levying of this tribute on officials, but they have not as yet proved completely successful, for the subordinate fears to offend his superiors.

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[1] The practice of openly taking from Parliament a sum for secret service money, which was usually applied by the government in power for electioneering purposes, has just been finally extinguished (1887) in England. A sum is still voted for foreign secret service. In England, however, the money was regularly voted each session for the purpose, and though no account was rendered, it was well understood how it went.

[2] Federal officials, would, as a rule, contribute only to the fund for Federal elections; but when the contest covered both Federal and city offices the funds would be apt to be blended.

[3] To make the calculation complete we should have to reckon in also the State officials and assessments payable by them.

V. Another useful expedient has been borrowed from European monarchies in the sale of nominations and occasionally of offices themselves.[1] A person who seeks to be nominated as candidate for one of the more important offices, such as a judgeship or a seat in the State Senate, or in Congress, is often required to contribute to the election fund a sum proportioned to the importance of the place he seeks, the excuse given for the practice being the cost of elections; and the same principle is occasionally applied to the gift of non-elective offices, the right of appointing to which is vested in some official member of a Ring—*e.g.* a mayor. The price of a nomination for a seat in the State legislature is said to run from $500 up to $1000, and for one of the better judgeships as high as $5000; but this is largely matter of conjecture.[2] Of course much less will be given if the prospects of carrying the election are doubtful: the prices quoted must be taken to represent cases where the party majority makes success certain. Naturally, the salaries of officials have to be raised in order to enable them to bear this charge, so that in the long run it may be thrown upon the public; and a recent eminent boss of New York City defended, before a committee of the legislature, the large salaries paid to aldermen, on the ground that "heavy demands were made on them by their party."[1]

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[1] As judicial places were sold under the old French monarchy, and commissions in the army in England till 1872.

[2] "A judgeship," says Mr. F. W. Whitridge, "costs in New York about $15,000; the district attorneyship the same; for a nomination to Congress the price is about $4000, though this is variable; an aldermanic nomination is worth $1500, and that for the Assembly from $600 to $1500. The amount realized from these assessments cannot be exactly estimated, but the amount raised by Tammany Hall, which is the most complete political organization, may be fixed very nearly at $125,000 (£25,000). This amount is collected and expended by a small executive committee who keep no accounts and are responsible only to each other."—Article "Assessments," in *Amer. Cyclop. of Political Science.*

In 1887 the Democratic Rings in New York City demanded $25,000 for the nomination to the Comptrollership, and $5000 for that to a State Senatorship. The salary of the Comptroller is $10,000 for three years, that of Senator $1500 for two years, *i.e.* the senatorial candidate is expected to pay $2000 more than his salary.

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[1] "Before a committee of the New York legislature the county clerk testified that his income was nearly $80,000 a year, but with refreshing frankness admitted that his own position was practically that of a figurehead, and that all the work was done by his deputy on a small fixed salary. As the county clerk's term is three years, he should nominally receive $240,000, but as a matter of fact two-thirds of the money probably goes to the political organizations with which he is connected."—Mr. T. Roosevelt in *Century* magazine for Nov. 1886. A county officer answered the same committee, when they put what was meant to be a formal question as to whether he performed his public duties faithfully, that he did so perform them whenever they did not conflict with his political duties! meaning thereby, as he explained, attending to his local organizations, seeing politicians, "fixing" primaries, bailing out those of his friends who were summoned to appear before a justice of peace, etc.

CHAPTER LXIV

LOCAL EXTENSION OF RINGS AND BOSSES

To determine the extent to which the Ring and Boss system sketched in the preceding chapters prevails over the United States would be difficult even for an American, because it would require a minute knowledge of the local affairs of all the States and cities. Much more, then, is it difficult for a European. I can do no more than indicate generally the results of the inquiries I have made, commending the details of the question to some future investigator.

It has been pointed out that rings and bosses are the product not of democracy, but of a particular form of democratic government, acting under certain peculiar conditions. They belong to democratic government, as the old logicians would say, not *simpliciter* but *secundum quid:* they are not of its essence, but are merely separable accidents. We have seen that these conditions are—

The existence of a Spoils System (= paid offices given and taken away for party reasons).

Opportunities for illicit gains arising out of the possession of office.

The presence of a mass of ignorant and pliable voters.

The insufficient participation in politics of the "good citizens."

If these be the true causes or conditions producing the phenomenon, we may expect to find it most fully developed in the places where the conditions exist in fullest measure, less so where they are more limited, absent where they do not exist.

A short examination of the facts will show that such is the case.

It may be thought that the Spoils System is a constant, existing everywhere, and therefore not admitting of the application of this method of concomitant variations. That system does no doubt prevail over every State of the Union, but it is not everywhere an equally potent factor, for in some cities the offices are much better paid than in others, and the revenues which their occupants control are larger. In some small communities the offices, or most of them, are not paid at all.[1] Hence this factor also may be said to vary.

We may therefore say with truth that all of the four conditions above named are most fully present in great cities. Some of the offices are highly paid; many give facilities for lucrative jobbing. The voters are so numerous that a strong and active organization is needed to drill them; the majority so ignorant as to be easily led. The best citizens are engrossed in business and cannot give to political work the continuous attention it demands. Such are the phenomena of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Brooklyn, St. Louis, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Baltimore, and New Orleans. In these cities Ring-and-bossdom has attained its amplest growth, overshadowing the whole field of politics.[2]

Of the first two of these I need not speak in detail here, proposing to describe their phenomena in later chapters. Chicago, Baltimore, and San Francisco are little if at all better. I subjoin some remarks bearing on five other cities, with which I was (1887) favoured by leading citizens resident therein, in reply to interrogatories which I addressed to them. The importance of the subject may excuse the length of these quotations. Knowing how apt a stranger is to imagine a greater uniformity than exists, I am anxious to enable the reader to understand to what extent the description I have given is generally true, and with what local diversities its general truth is compatible.

Cincinnati (population in 1880, 255,139)—

> "Our Ring is in a less formal shape than is sometimes seen, but dishonest men of both parties do in fact combine for common profits at the public expense. As regards a Boss, there is at this moment an interregnum, but some ambitious men are observed to be making progress towards that dignity. Rings are both the effect and the cause of peculation. They are the result of the general law of combination to further the interest of the combiners.
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> "Where a Ring exists it can always exclude from office a good citizen

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[1] For instance, the "selectmen" of a New England Town are not paid.

[2] Of course the results are not equally bad in all these cities.

known to be hostile to it. But a good easy man who will not fight and will make a reputable figurehead may be an excellent investment.

"The large cities are the great sufferers from the Spoils System, because in them power gives the greatest opportunity for profit and peculation. In them also it is easy to make a more or less open combination of keepers of tippling shops and the 'bummers,' etc., who congregate in them. Here, too, is the natural home of the class of vagabonds who will profess devotion to the party or the man who will pay them, and who combine to levy blackmail upon every candidate, and in turn are ready to stuff ballot-boxes, to buy votes, to 'repeat,' etc. These scoundrels 'live by politics' in their way, and force their services upon more prominent men, till there comes to be a sort of 'solidarity' in which men of national reputation find themselves morally compromised by being obliged to recognize this sort of fraternity, and directly or indirectly to make themselves responsible for the methods of these 'henchmen' and followers. They dare not break with this class because its enmity would defeat their ambitions, and the more unscrupulous of them make fullest use of the co-operation, only rendering a little homage to decency by seeking to do it through intermediates, so as not too disgustingly to dirty their own hands.

"In such a condition of things the cities become the prey of the 'criminal class' in politics, in order to ensure the discipline and organization in State and national politics which are necessary to the distinguished leaders for success. As a result it goes almost without saying that every considerable city has its rings and its actual or would-be bosses. There are occasional 'revolutions of the palace' in which bosses are deposed, or 'choked off,' because they are growing too fat on the spoils, and there is no such permanence of tenure as to enable the uninitiated always to tell what boss or what ring is in power. They do not publish an *Almanach de Gotha*, but we feel and know that the process of plunder continues. A man of genius in this way, like a Tweed or a Kelly, comes occasionally to the front, but even in the absence of a ruler of this sort the ward politicians can always tell where the decisive influences reside.

"The *size* of the city in which the system reaches full bloom depends upon its business and general character. Small towns with a proportionately large manufacturing population are better fields for rings than more homogeneous communities built up as centres of mercantile trade. The *tendency* however is to organize an official body of 'workers' in even the smallest community; and the selfishness of man naturally leads to the doctrine that those who do the work shall live by it. Thus, from the profits of 'rotation in office' and the exercise of intrigue and trick to get the place of the present incumbent, there is the *facilis descensus* to regarding the profits of peculation and the plunder of the public as a legitimate corrective for the too slow accumulation from legal pay. Certain salaries and fees in local offices are notoriously kept high, so that the incumbent may freely 'bleed' for party use, or, what is the same thing, for the use of party 'bummers.' Thus we have had clerks of courts and sheriffs getting many times as much pay as the judges on the bench, etc. From this, jobbing in contracts, bribery, and unblushing stealing are reached by such easy steps that perhaps the local politician is hardly conscious of the progress in his moral education."

St. Louis (population in 1880, 350,518)—

"There are always Rings in both parties more or less active according to circumstances.

"Two or perhaps three men are the recognized Bosses of the Democratic party (which is in the majority), one man of the Republican.

"The Rings are the cause of both peculation and jobbery, although St. Louis has had no 'big steal.'

"A good citizen seeking office would be excluded by the action of the Rings in our large cities, except in times of excitement, when good people are aroused to a proper sense of duty."

Louisville (Kentucky), population in 1880, 123,758—

"It can hardly be said that there is a regular Ring in Louisville. There are corrupt combinations, but they are continually shifting. The higher places in these combinations are occupied by Democrats, these being the ruling party, but they always contain some Republicans.

"The only Boss there is in Louisville to-day is the Louisville Gas Company. It works mainly through the Democratic party, as it is easier to bribe the 'Republican' negroes into the support of Democratic candidates than white Democrats to support Republicans.

"There is very little peculation in Kentucky now—no great disclosure for over five years; but there is a great deal of jobbery.

"The effect of the combinations is of course towards excluding good and capable men from office and to make room for mere favourites and local politicians."

Minneapolis (Minnesota), population in 1880, 46,887, now estimated at 200,000—

"There has been for several years past a very disreputable Ring, which has come into power by capturing the machinery of the Democratic party, through (1) diligent work in the ward caucuses; (2) by its active alliance with the liquor dealers, gamblers, and so forth, and the support of 'lewd fellows of the baser sort,' regardless of national political preferences; (3) by a skilful and plausible championship of 'labor' and a capture of the labor vote.

"The Boss of this gang is thoroughly disliked and distrusted by the responsible and reputable element of his party in Minnesota, but they tolerate him on account of his popularity and because they cannot break him down. He has operated chiefly through control of the police system. Instead of suppressing gambling houses, for example, he, being a high official, has allowed several of them to run under police protection, himself sharing in their large gains. Until recently the liquor saloon licences have been $500 (£100) a year. He and the heads of the police department have allowed a number of places to retail liquor somewhat secretly outside the police patrol limits, within which we restrict the liquor traffic, and from these illicit publicans the Ring has collected large sums of money.

"The Ring has seemed to control the majority in the Common Council, but the system of direct taxation and of checking expenditure is so open, and the scrutiny of the press and public so constant, that there has been little opportunity for actual plunder. In the awarding of contracts there is sometimes a savour of jobbery, and several of the councilmen are not above taking bribes. But they have been able to do comparatively little mischief; in fact, nothing outrageous has occurred outside of the police department. The Ring has lately obtained control of the (elective) Park Board, and some disreputable jobs have resulted. So there have been malpractices in the department of health and hospitals, in the management of the water system and in the giving away of a street railway franchise. But we are not a badly-plundered city by any means; and we have just succeeded in taking the control of the police out of the hands of the Ring officials and vested it in a Metropolitan Police Board, with excellent results. Two of the Ring are now under indictment of the county grand jury for malpractices in office."

St. Paul (Minnesota), population in 1880, 41,473, now over 160,000—

"There is no regular Ring in St. Paul. It has for many years been in the hands of a clique of municipal Democratic politicians, who are fairly good citizens, and have committed no very outrageous depredations. The city is run upon a narrow partisan plan, but in its main policies and expenditures the views of leading citizens as formulated in the Chamber of Commerce almost invariably prevail.

"The Rings of Western cities (adds my informant) are not deliberately organized for plunder or jobbery. They grow out of our party politics. Certain of the worse elements of a party find that their superior diligence and skill in the manipulation of precinct and ward caucuses put them in control of the local machinery of their party organization. The success of their party gives them control of municipal affairs. They are generally men who are not engaged in successful trade or professional life, and make city politics their business. They soon find it profitable to engage in various small schemes and jobs for profit, but do not usually perpetrate anything very bold or bad."

I have taken the two cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul because they illustrate the differences which one often finds between places whose population and other conditions seem very similar. The centres of these two cities are only ten miles apart;

their suburbs will soon begin to touch. Minneapolis is younger, and has grown far more rapidly, and the manufacturing element in its population is larger. But in most respects it resembles its elder sister—they are extremely jealous of one another—so closely that an Old World observer who has not realized the swiftness with which phenomena come and go in the West is surprised to find the political maladies of the one so much graver than those of the other. In a few years' time Minneapolis may have regained health, St. Paul perhaps have lost it.

In cities of the second rank (say from ten thousand to one hundred thousand inhabitants) some of the same mischiefs exist, but on a smaller scale. The opportunities for jobbing are limited. The offices are moderately paid. The population of new immigrants, politically incompetent, and therefore easily pervertible, bears a smaller ratio to the native Americans. The men most prominent by their wealth or capacity are more likely to be known to the mass of the voters, and may have more leisure to join in local politics. Hence, although we find rings in many of these cities, they are less powerful, less audacious, less corrupt. There are, of course, differences between one city and another, differences sometimes explicable by its history and the character of its population. A very high authority writes me from Michigan, a State above the average—

> "I have heard no charge of the reign of Bosses or Rings for the 'purposes of peculation' in any of the cities or towns of Michigan or Indiana, or indeed in more than a few of our cities generally, and those for the most part are the large cities. In certain cases rings or bosses have managed political campaigns for partisan purposes, and sometimes to such an extent, say in Detroit (population in 1880, 116,340), that good citizens have been excluded from office or have declined to run. But robbery was not the aim of the rings. In not a few of our cities the liquor-saloon keepers have combined to 'run politics' so as to gain control and secure a municipal management friendly to them. That is in part the explanation of the great uprising of the Prohibition party. I think the country is not to be afflicted in the future as it has been in the past, with rings and bosses. The people, even in the larger cities, have at last been awakened."

The cities of New York State seem to suffer more than those of New England or the West. Albany (a place of 90,000 people) has long groaned under its bosses, but as the seat of the New York legislature it is a focus of intrigue. Buffalo (with 155,000) has a large Irish and German population. Rocheste and Troy are ruled by local cliques; the latter is full of fellows who go to serve as "repeaters" at Albany elections. Syracuse is smaller and better than any of the four preceding, but has of late years shown some serious symptoms of the same disease. Cleveland in Ohio is a larger place than any of these, but having, like the rest of Northern Ohio, a better quality of population, its rings have never carried things with a high hand, nor stolen public money. The same may be said of Milwaukee in Wisconsin, and such New England cities as Providence, Augusta, Hartford, Lowell. The system more or less exists in all of these, but the bosses have not ventured to exclude respectable outsiders from office, nor have they robbed the city, debauched the legislature, retained their power by election frauds after the manner of their great models in New York and Philadelphia. And this seems to hold true also of the Western and Southern cities of moderate size.

As regards Ohio a judicious authority says—

> "Rings are much less likely to exist in the smaller cities, though a population of 30,000 or 40,000 may occasionally support them. We should hardly find them in a city below 10,000: any corruption there would be occasional, not systematic."

As regards Missouri I am informed that—

> "We have few or no Rings in cities under 60,000 inhabitants. The smaller cities are not favourable to such kinds of control. Men know one another too well. There is no large floating irresponsible following as in large cities."

A similar answer from Kentucky adds that Rings have nevertheless been heard of in cities so small as Lexington (25,000 inhabitants) and Frankfort (6500).

In quite small towns and in the rural districts—in fact, wherever there is not a municipality, but government is either by a town meeting and selectmen or by township or county officials—the dangerous conditions are reduced to their minimum. The new immigrants are not generally planted in large masses but scattered among the native population, whose habits and modes of thinking they soon acquire. The Germans and Scandinavians who settle in the country districts have been (for the quality of the most recent immigrants is lower) among the best of their race, and have formed a valuable element. The country voter, whether native or foreign, is exposed to fewer temptations than his brother of the city, and is less easy either to lead or to drive. He is parsimonious, and pays his county or town officials on a niggardly scale. A boss has therefore no occupation in such a place. His talents would be wasted. If a ring exists in a small city it is little more than a clique of local lawyers who combine to get hold of the local offices, each in his turn, and to secure a seat for one of themselves in the State legislature, where there may be pickings to be had. It is not easy to draw the line between such a clique, which one may find all the world over, and a true Ring: but by whichever name we call the weed, it does little harm to the crop. Here and there, however, one meets with a genuine Boss even in these seats of rural innocence. I know a New England Town, with a population of about ten thousand people, which has long been ruled by such a local wire-puller. I do not think he steals. But he has gathered a party of voters round him, by whose help he carries the offices, and gets a chance of perpetrating jobs which enrich himself and supply work for his supporters. The circumstances, however, are exceptional. Within the taxing area of the Town there lie many villas of wealthy merchants, who do business in a neighbouring city, but are taxed on their summer residences here. Hence the funds which this Town has to deal with are much larger than would be the case in most towns of its size, while many of the rich tax-payers are not citizens here, but vote in the city where they live during the winter.[1] Hence they cannot go to the town meeting to beard the boss, but must grin and pay while they watch his gambols.

Speaking generally, the country places and the smaller cities are not ring-ridden. There is a tendency everywhere for the local party organizations to fall into the hands of a few men, perhaps of one man. But this happens not so much from an intent to exclude others and misuse power, as because the work is left to those who have some sort of interest in doing it, that, namely, of being themselves nominated to an office. Such persons are seldom professional office-seekers, but lawyers, farmers, or store-keepers, who are glad to add something to their income, and have the importance, not so contemptible in a village, of sitting in the State legislature. Nor does much harm result The administration is fairly good; the tax-payers are not robbed. If a leading citizen, who does not belong to the managing circle, wishes to get a nomination, he will probably succeed; in fact, no one will care to exclude him. In many places there is a non-party "citizens' committee" which takes things out of the hands of the two organizations by running as candidates respectable men irrespective of party. Such candidates are often carried, and will be carried if the local party managers have offended public sentiment by bad nominations. In short, the materials for real ring government do not exist, and its methods are inapplicable, outside the large cities. No one needs to fear it, or does fear it.

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[1] It will be remembered that in the United States, though a man may pay taxes on his real estate in any number of States or counties or cities, he can vote, even in purely local elections or on purely local matters, in one place only—that in which he is held to reside.

What has been said refers chiefly to the Northern, Middle, and Western States. The circumstances of the South are different, but they illustrate equally well the general laws of ring growth. In the Southern cities there is scarcely any population of European immigrants. The lowest class consists of negroes and "poor whites." The negroes are ignorant, and would be dangerously plastic material in the hands of unscrupulous wire-pullers, as was amply shown after the Civil War. But they have hitherto mostly belonged to the Republican party, and the Democratic party has so completely regained its ascendency that the bosses who controlled the negro vote can do nothing. In most parts of the South the men of ability and standing have interested themselves in politics so far as to dictate the lines of party action. Their position when self-government was restored and the carpet-baggers had to be overthrown forced them to exertions. Sometimes they use or tolerate a ring, but they do not suffer it to do serious mischief, and it is usually glad to nominate one of them, or any one whom they recommend. The old traditions of social leadership survive better in the South than in the North, so that the poorer part of the white population is more apt to follow the suggestions of eminent local citizens and to place them at its head when they will accept the position. Moreover, the South is a comparatively poor country. Less is to be gained from office (including membership of a legislature), either in the way of salary or indirectly through jobbing contracts or influencing legislation. The prizes in the profession of politics being fewer, the profession is not prosecuted with the same earnestness and perfection of organization. There are, however, some cities where conditions similar to those of large Northern cities reappear, and there Ring-and-bossdom reappears also. New Orleans is the best example, and in Arkansas and Texas, where there never was a plantation aristocracy like that of the Atlantic Slave States, rings are pretty numerous, though, as the cities are small and seldom rich, their exploits attract little attention.

CHAPTER LXV

SPOILS

An illustration of the familiar dictum regarding the wisdom with which the world is governed may be found in the fact that the greatest changes are often those introduced with the least notion of their consequence, and the most fatal those which encounter least resistance. So the system of removals from Federal office which began some sixty years ago, though disapproved of by some of the leading statesmen of the time, including Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, excited comparatively little attention in the country, nor did its advocates foresee a tithe of its far-reaching results.

The Constitution of the United States vests the right of appointing to Federal offices in the President, requiring the consent of the Senate in the case of the more important, and permitting Congress to vest the appointment of inferior officers in the President alone, in the courts, or in the heads of departments. It was assumed that this clause gave officials a tenure at the pleasure of the President—*i.e.* that he had the legal right of removing them without cause assigned. But the earlier Presidents considered the tenure as being practically for life or during good behaviour, and did not remove, except for some solid reason, persons appointed by their predecessors. Washington in his eight years displaced only nine persons, and all for cause, John Adams nine in four years, and those not on political grounds. Jefferson in his eight years removed thirty-nine, but many of these were persons whom Adams had unfairly put in just before quitting office; and in the twenty years that followed (1808-28) there were but sixteen removals. In 1820, however, a bill was run through Congress fixing four years as the term for a large number of offices. This was ominous of evil, and called forth the displeasure of both Jefferson and Madison. The

President, however, and his heads of departments did not remove, so the tenure of good behaviour generally remained. But a new era began with the hot and heady Jackson, who reached the presidential chair in 1829. He was a raw rude Western, a man of the people, borne into power by a popular movement, incensed against all who were connected with his predecessor, a warm friend and a bitter enemy, anxious to repay services rendered to himself. Penetrated by extreme theories of equality, he proclaimed in his Message that rotation in office was a principle in the Republican creed, and obeyed both his doctrine and his passions by displacing five hundred post-masters in his first year, and appointing partisans in their room. The plan of using office as a mere engine in partisan warfare had already been tried in New York, where the stress of party contests had led to an early development of many devices in party organization; and it was a New York adherent of Jackson, Marcy, who, speaking in the Senate in 1832, condensed the new doctrine in a phrase that has become famous—"To the victor belong the spoils."[1]

From 1828 till a few years ago the rule with both parties has been that on a change of President nearly all Federal offices, from the legations to European Courts down to village post-masterships, are deemed to be vacant. The present holders may of course be continued or reappointed (if their term has expired); and if the new President belongs to the same party as his predecessor, many of them will be; but they are not held to have either a legal or a moral claim. The choice of the President or departmental head has been absolutely free, no qualifications, except the citizenship of the nominee, being required, nor any check imposed on him, except that the Senate's consent is needed to the more important posts.[2]

The want of knowledge on the part of the President and his ministers of the persons who applied for places at a distance, obliged them to seek information and advice from those who, belonging to the neighbourhood, could give it. It was natural for the senators from a State or the representative in Congress from a district within which a vacant office lay, to recommend to the President candidates for it, natural for the President or his ministers to be guided by this recommendation, of course, in both cases, only when they belonged to the same party as the President.[1] Although this usage received no sanction from the Constitution, senators and representatives maintained it so persistently, since it strengthened themselves and their party in the locality, that the executive virtually admitted the rights they claimed, and suffered its patronage to be prostituted to the purpose of rewarding local party service and conciliating local party support. Now and then a President, or a strong Minister controlling the President, has proved restive; yet the usage continues, being grounded on the natural wish of the executive to have the good-will and help of the senators in getting treaties and appointments confirmed, and on the feeling that the party in every district must be strengthened by a distribution of good things, in the way which the local leader thinks most serviceable. The essential features of the system are, that a place in the public service is held at the absolute pleasure of the appointing authority; that it is invariably bestowed from party motives on a party man, as a reward for party services (whether of the appointee or of some one who pushes him); that no man expects to hold it any longer than his party holds power; and that he has therefore the strongest personal reasons for fighting in the party ranks. Thus the conception of office among politicians came to be not the ideal one, of its involving a duty to the community, nor the "practical" one, of its being a snug berth in which a man may live if he does not positively neglect his work, but the perverted one, of its being a salary paid in respect of party services, past, present, and future.

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[1] Before 1820 Governor Clinton complained "of an organized and disciplined corps of Federal officials interfering in State elections." Marcy's speech was a defence of the system of partisan removals and short terms from the example of his own State. "They [the New York politicians] when contending for victory avow the intention of enjoying the fruits of it. They see nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy."

[2] See on this subject, Chapter V. in Vol. I.

The politicians, however, could hardly have riveted this system on the country but for certain notions which had become current among the mass of the people. "Rotation in office" was, and indeed by most men still is, held to be conformable to the genius of a democracy. It gives every man an equal chance of power and salary, resembling herein the Athenian and Florentine system of choosing officers by lot. It is supposed to stimulate men to exertion, to foster a laudable ambition to serve the country or the neighbourhood, to prevent the growth of an official caste, with its habits of routine, its stiffness, its arrogance. It recognizes that equality which is so dear to the American mind, bidding an official remember that he is the servant of the people and not their master, like the bureaucrats of Europe. It forbids him to fancy that he has any right to be where he is, any ground for expecting to stay there. It ministers in an odd kind of way to that fondness for novelty and change in persons and surroundings which is natural in the constantly-moving communities of the West. The habit which grew up of electing State and city officers for short terms tended in the same direction. If those whom the people itself chose were to hold office only for a year or two, why should those who were appointed by Federal authority have a longer tenure? And the use of patronage for political purposes was further justified by the example of England, whose government was believed by the Americans of fifty years ago to be worked, as in last century it largely was worked, by the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury in his function of distributing places to members of the House of Commons, and honours (such as orders, and steps in the peerage) to members of the House of Lords, ecclesiastical preferments to the relatives of both.[1]

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[1] Not necessarily the majority, for the President may be of the party which is in a minority in Congress.

Another and a potent reason why the rotation plan commended itself to the Americans is to be found in the belief that one man is as good as another, and will do well enough any work you set him to, a belief happily expressed by their old enemy King George the Third when he said that "every man is good enough for any place he can get." In America every smart man is expected to be able to do anything that he turns his hand to, and the fact that a man has worked himself into a place is some evidence of his smartness. He is a "practical man." This is at bottom George the Third's idea; if you are clever enough to make people give you a place, you are clever enough to discharge its duties, or to conceal the fact that you are not discharging them. It may be added that most of these Federal places, and those which come most before the eyes of the ordinary citizen, require little special fitness. Any careful and honest man does fairly well for a tide-waiter or a lighthouse keeper. Able and active men had no great interest in advocating appointment by merit or security of tenure, for they seldom wanted places themselves; and they had, or thought they had, an interest in jobbing their poor relatives and unprosperous friends into the public service. It is true that the relative or friend ran the risk of being turned out. But hope is stronger than fear. The prospect of getting a place affects ten people for one who is affected by the prospect of losing it, for aspirants are many and places relatively few.

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[1] Now of course the tables have been turned, and the examples of the practically irremovable English civil service and of the competitive entrance examinations in England are cited against the American system.

Hitherto we have been considering Federal offices only, the immense majority whereof are such petty posts as those of postmaster in a village, custom-house officer at a seaport, and so forth, although they also include clerkships in the departments at Washington, foreign ambassadorships and consulates, and governorships of the Territories. The system of rotation had however laid such a hold on the mind of the country that it soon extended itself over State offices and city offices also, in so far as such offices remained appointive, and were not, like the higher administrative posts and (in most of the States and the larger cities) the judicial offices, handed over to popular election. Thus appointment by favour and tenure at the pleasure of the appointer became the rule in every sphere and branch of government, National, State, and municipal, down to that very recent time of which I shall speak presently. It may seem strange that a people so eminently practical as the Americans acquiesced in a system which perverts public office from its proper function of serving the public, destroys the prospect of that skill which comes with experience, and gives nobody the least security that he will gain a higher post, or even retain the one he holds, by displaying the highest efficiency. The explanation is that administration used to be conducted in a happy-go-lucky way, that the citizens, accustomed to help themselves, relied very little on their functionaries, and did not care whether they were skilful or not, and that it was so easy and so common for a man who fell out of one kind of business to take to and make his living by another that deprivation seemed to involve little hardship. However, the main reason was that there was no party and no set of persons specially interested in putting an end to the system, whereas there soon came to be a set specially concerned to defend it. It developed, I might almost say created, the class of professional politicians, and they maintained it, because it exactly suited them. That great and growing volume of political work to be done in managing primaries, conventions, and elections for the city, State, and National governments, whereof I have already spoken, and which the advance of democratic sentiment and the needs of party warfare evolved from 1820 down to about 1850, needed men who should give to it constant and undivided attention. These men the plan of rotation in office provided. Persons who had nothing to gain for themselves would soon have tired of the work. The members of a permanent civil service would have had no motive for interfering in politics, because the political defeat of a public officer's friends would have left his position the same as before, and the civil service not being all of one party, but composed of persons appointed at different times by executives of different hues, would not have acted together as a whole. Those, however, whose bread and butter depend on their party may be trusted to work for their party, to enlist recruits, look after the organization, play electioneering tricks from which ordinary party spirit might recoil. The class of professional politicians was therefore the first crop which the spoils system, the system of using public office as private plunder, bore. Bosses were the second crop. In the old Scandinavian poetry the special title of the king or chieftain is "the giver of rings." He attracts followers and rewards the services, whether of the warrior or the skald, by liberal gifts. So the Boss wins and holds power by the bestowal of patronage. Places are the prize of victory in election warfare; he divides this spoil before as well as after the battle, promising the higher elective offices to the strongest among his fighting men, and dispensing the minor appointive offices which lie in his own gift, or that of his lieutenants, to combatants of less note but equal loyalty. Thus the chieftain consolidates, extends, fortifies his power by rewarding his supporters. He garrisons the outposts with his squires and henchmen, who are bound fast to him by the hope of getting something more, and the fear of losing what they have. Most of these appointive offices are too poorly paid to attract able men; but they form a stepping-stone to the higher ones obtained by popular election; and the desire to get them and keep them provides that numerous rank and file which the American system requires to work the Machine. In a country like England office is an object of desire to a few prominent men, but only to a few, because the places which are vacated on a change of government are less than fifty in all, while vacancies in other places happen only by death or promotion. Hence an insignificant number of persons out of the whole population have a personal pecuniary interest in the triumph of their party. In England, therefore, one has what may be called the general officers and headquarters staff of an army of professional politicians, but few subalterns and no privates. And in England most of these general officers are rich men, independent of official salaries. In America the privates are proportioned in number to the officers. They are a great host. As nearly all live by politics, they are held together by a strong personal motive. When their party is kept out of the spoils of the Federal government, as the Democrats were out from 1861 till 1885, they have a second chance in the State spoils, a third chance in the city spoils; and the prospect of winning at least one of these two latter sets of places maintains their discipline and whets their appetite, however slight may be their chance of capturing the Federal offices.

It is these spoilsmen who have depraved and distorted the mechanism of politics. It is they who pack the primaries and run the conventions so as to destroy the freedom of popular choice, they who contrive and execute the election frauds which disgrace some States and cities,—repeating and ballot stuffing, obstruction of the polls, and fraudulent countings in.[1]

In making every administrative appointment a matter of party claim and personal favour, the system has lowered the general tone of public morals, for it has taught men to neglect the interests of the community, and made insincerity ripen into cynicism. Nobody supposes that merit has anything to do with promotion, or believes the pretext alleged for an appointment. Politics has been turned into the art of distributing salaries so as to secure the maximum of support from friends with the minimum of offence to opponents. To this art able men have been forced to bend their minds: on this Presidents and ministers have spent those hours which were demanded by the real problems of the country.[2] The rising politician must think of obscure supporters seeking petty places as well as of those greater appointments by which his knowledge of men and his honesty deserve to be judged. It is hardly a caricature in Mr. Lowell's satire when the intending presidential candidate writes to his maritime friend in New England,—

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[1] The fact that in Canada the civil service is permanent may well be thought to have something to do with the absence of such a regular party Machine as the United States possess.

[2] President Garfield said "one-third of the working hours of senators and representatives is scarcely sufficient to meet the demands in reference to the appointments to office. . . . With a judicious system of civil service the business of the departments could be better done at half the cost."

"If you git me inside the White House,
Your head with ile I'll kinder 'nint,
By gittin' you inside the light-house,
Down to the end of Jaalam pint."

After this, it seems a small thing to add that rotation in office has not improved the quality of the civil service. Men selected for their services at elections or in primaries have not proved the most capable servants of the public. As most of the posts they fill need nothing more than such ordinary business qualities as the average American possesses, the mischief has not come home to the citizens generally, but it has sometimes been serious in the higher grades, such as the departments at Washington and some of the greater custom-houses. Moreover, the official is not free to attend to his official duties. More important, because more influential on his fortunes, is the duty to his party of looking after its interests at the election, and his duty to his chiefs, the Boss and Ring, of seeing that the candidate they favour gets the party nomination. Such an official, whom democratic theory seeks to remind of his dependence on the public, does not feel himself bound to the public, but to the city boss or senator or congressman who has procured his appointment. Gratitude, duty, service, are all for the patron. So far from making the official zealous in the performance of his functions, insecurity of tenure has discouraged sedulous application to work, since it is not by such application that office is retained and promotion won. The administration of some among the public departments in Federal and city government is more behind that of private enterprises than is the case in European countries; the ingenuity and executive talent which the nation justly boasts, are least visible in national or municipal business. In short, the civil service is not in America, and cannot under the system of rotation become, a career. Place-hunting is the career, and an office is not a public trust, but a means of requiting party services, and also, under the method of assessments previously described, a source whence party funds may be raised for election purposes.

Some of these evils were observed as far back as 1853, when an Act was passed by Congress requiring clerks appointed to the departments at Washington to pass a qualifying examination.[1] Neither this nor subsequent legislative efforts in the same direction produced any improvement, for the men in office who ought to have given effect to the law were hostile to it. Similar causes defeated the system of competitive examination, inaugurated by an Act of Congress in 1871, when the present agitation for civil service reform had begun to lay hold of the public mind. Mr. Hayes (1877-81) was the first President who seems to have honestly desired to reform the civil service, but the opposition of the politicians, and the indifference of Congress, which had legislated merely in deference to the pressure of enlightened opinion outside, proved too much for him. A real step in advance was however made in 1883, by the passage of what is called from its author (late senator from Ohio) the Pendleton Act, which instituted a board of civil service commissioners (to be named by the President), directing them to apply a system of competitive examinations to a considerable number of offices in the departments at Washington, and a smaller number in other parts of the country. President Arthur named a good commission, and under the rules framed by it some improvement was effected. When Mr. Cleveland became President in 1885 it was feared that the hungry Democrats, having been out of power since 1861, would fall like wolves upon the offices, compelling the President to dismiss the present place-holders to make room for his own partisans. Mr. Cleveland, however, if he did much less good than sanguine reformers hoped, seems to have acquiesced in less evil than many reformers expected. That he did not make a clean sweep of office-holders, whether belonging to the classes covered by the Pendleton Act or to any others, may be gathered from the complaints that arose from Democratic spoilsmen, who thought the presidency hardly worth winning if it did not bear fruit for the class they belong to. The action of President Harrison, who succeeded in 1889, cannot as yet be fully judged.

The Act of 1883 originally applied to only 14,000 (now however to 28,000) out of about 120,000 posts. But its moral effect has been greater than this proportion represents, and entitles it to the description given of it at the time as "a sad blow to the pessimists." It strengthens the hands of any President who may desire reform, and has stimulated the civil service reform movement in States and municipalities. Several States have now instituted examinations for admission to their civil service; and similar legislation has been applied to New York, Brooklyn, Boston, and other cities. Some years must pass before the result of these changes upon the purification of politics can be fairly judged. It is for the present enough to say that while the state of things above described has been generally true both of Federal and of State and city administration during the last sixty years, there is now reason to hope that the practice of appointing for short terms, and dismissing in order to fill vacancies with political adherents, has been shaken; and that the extension of examinations will tend more and more to exclude mere spoilsmen from the public service.

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[1] To have made places tenable during good behaviour would have been open to the objection that it would prevent the dismissal of incompetent men against whom no specific charge could be proved.

CHAPTER LXVI

ELECTIONS AND THEIR MACHINERY

I CANNOT attempt to describe the complicated and varying election laws of the different States. But there are some peculiarities ot election usage common to most or all States, which have told so much upon practical politics, especially on the Machine politics of cities, as to require a passing notice.

All expenses of preparing the polling places and of paying the clerks and other election officers who receive and count the votes, are borne by the community, not (as in Britain) by the candidates.

All elections, whether for city, State, or Federal offices, are in nearly all States conducted by ballot, which, however, was introduced, and has been regarded, not so much as a device for preventing bribery or intimidation, but rather as the quickest and easiest mode of taking the votes of a multitude. Secrecy has not been specially aimed at, and in point of fact is not generally secured. Accordingly the preparation and distribution to voters of the voting papers has been (I think universally[1]) left to the candidates and their friends, that is, to the parties, and the expense of printing and distributing these papers is borne by the latter.

An election is a far more complicated affair in America than in Europe. The number of elective offices is greater, and as terms of office are shorter, the number of offices to be voted for in any given year is much greater. To save the expense of numerous distinct pollings it is usual, though by no means universal, to take the pollings for a variety of offices at the same time, that is to say, to elect Federal officials (presidential electors and congressmen), State officials, county officials, and city officials on one and the same day and at the same polling booths. Presidential electors are chosen only once in four years, congressmen once in two. But the number of State and county and city places to be filled is so large that a voter seldom goes to the polling booth without having to cast his vote for at least eight or ten persons, candidates for different offices, and sometimes he may vote for twenty or thirty.[1]

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[1] I do not venture to make statements concerning all the States, because there are many variations in State laws. For the purpose of the present chapter it is of small importance to ascertain exactly what rules prevail in each and every State. What the text describes is the general practice.

This has given rise to the system of slip tickets. A slip ticket is a list, printed on a long strip of paper, of the persons standing in the same interest, that is to say, recommended by the same party or political group for the posts to be filled up at any election.[2] It is issued by the party organization on the eve of the election, and contains the names of the party nominees, with the offices for which they are respectively candidates. Copies of the slip, proportioned to the number of voters, are struck off by the party committee and handed to their agents, who take their stand in front of the polling booths and distribute the tickets to the voters as they come up and enter. Each party of course looks first after its own adherents, but gladly supplies its tickets to every voter who consents to take them. There is no secrecy; the voter may be seen taking the ticket from the agent of his party, and can be followed by watchful eyes from the moment of his having taken it till he deposits it in the ballot box. If he is an average sort of person, he drops it in just as he has received it. This is called voting the "regular" or "straight" ticket. If, however, he be a man of some independence, and dislikes one or more of the names he finds on his party ticket, he strikes out those names, and probably writes in some other name instead. This is called "scratching." To facilitate such action, the practice has grown up for agents to be placed at the voting place who supply small slips of paper gummed at the back, and bearing on the front the name of some other candidate for one or more of the posts vacant. Such slips are called "pasters" or "stickers," because the independent voter pastes them over the name or names of the person or persons he objects to on the ticket which he is about to place in the box, thus saving himself the trouble of "scratching," and securing the result he desires, that of voting his party ticket subject to the variations he prefers. Thus the degree to which pasters are used in a given election is a measure either of the badness of the lists of candidates issued by the parties, or of the independence of the voters, or of both phenomena together. Unfortunately, the number of candidates is often so great, and the knowledge which the average citizen has of many of them so small, that many who would be glad to "scratch" or "paste" have really no data for doing so, and, especially in large cities, vote the party ticket in despair.

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[1] Sometimes as many as six distinct ballot boxes are placed to receive votes for different sets of offices.

[2] A ticket includes more names or fewer, according to the number of offices to be filled, but usually more than a dozen. The Note at the end of this chapter contains several specimen tickets used at elections in 1887.

There are two questions that may be asked regarding an election system. One is, whether it is honestly carried out by the officials? To this question, as it regards the United States, no general answer can be given, because there are the widest possible differences between different States; differences due chiefly to the variations in their election laws, but partly also to the condition of the public conscience. In some States, such as, for instance, New York, the official conduct of elections is now believed to be absolutely pure, owing, one is told, to the excellence of a minutely careful law. In others, frauds, such as ballot stuffing and false counting, are said to be common, not only in city, but also in State and Federal elections. I have no data to determine how widely frauds prevail, for their existence can rarely be proved, and they often escape detection. They are sometimes suspected where they do not exist. Still there is reason to think that in some few States they are frequent enough to constitute a serious reproach.[1]

The other question is: Does the election machinery prevent intimidation, bribery, personation, repeating, and the other frauds which the agents of candidates or parties seek to perpetrate? Here too, there are great differences between one State and city and another, differences due both to the laws and to the character of the population. Of intimidation there is but little. Repeating and personation are not rare in dense populations where the agents and officials do not, and cannot, know the voters' faces. Of bribery I have spoken elsewhere. It is a sporadic disease, but often intense where it occurs. The ballot laws do little to check it, because "under our present system whole squads of voters are marched to the polls with their ballots in their hands so held that the boss can see them from the time they are received till they are deposited in the ballot boxes."[1] This is a consequence of the free hand which the party agents enjoy in supplying their tickets to the voters.

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[1] They were specially frequent, and are not extinct, in some of the Southern States, being there used to prevent the negro voters from returning Republican candidates. It was here that the use of "tissue ballots" was most common. I was told in San Francisco that elections had become more pure since the introduction of glass ballot boxes, which made it difficult for the presiding officials to stock the ballot box with voting papers before the voting began in the morning.

The plan of leaving the preparation and distribution of ballot papers to the parties has, however, had another, and a very important, result. It has thrown power into the hands of the party organizations, and by supplying an excuse for their activity, and for the expenditure which that activity involves, it has helped to develop the Machine into its portentous predominance. I will endeavour to illustrate this from the case of New York City, basing myself on two able and instructive papers, published in 1887,[2] and whose statements of facts have not, so far as I know, been impugned.

In New York City elections are placed under the control of the Police Board, consisting of four commissioners, two of whom are required by law to be Democrats, two Republicans. The Police Board is directed to appoint annually in each of the 812 election districts of the city—

> "As inspectors of elections, four persons, two of whom on State issues shall be of different faith and opinion from their associates, and those appointed to represent the party and political minority on State issues to be named solely by such of the commissioners of police in the said police board as are the representatives of such political minority . . and also as poll clerks two persons of different political faith and opinions on State issues."[3]

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[1] I quote from an article by Mr. J. B. Bishop, in *Scribner's Magazine* for February 1888. He is speaking of the practice of New York, whose law, excellent as regards the custody and counting of the ballots, has not provided for real secrecy of voting ; but his observations are, I believe, applicable to most States. Some, as for instance Wisconsin, have recently amended their law in this point.

[2] By Mr. Ivins, city chamberlain of New York, and Mr. J. B. Bishop. Both papers were originally read before the Commonwealth Club of New York City.

[3] I quote from Mr. Ivins's paper. This statutory recognition of party as a qualification for office is not unusual in America, having been found necessary to ensure some sort of equal distribution between the parties of the posts of election officers, for the fairness of whose action it was essential that there should be some sort of guarantee. "State issues" are named because the two great parties are usually each of them undivided in State party warfare, but sometimes split into factions in city politics.

There are, accordingly, 4872 election officers, half of them Democrats, half Republicans, each set being appointed by the commissioners of its own party. Here is a solid lump of patronage placed at the disposal of party leaders; for the aggregate salaries of these officials (five days, at $7.50 per day) amounted to nearly $150,000 (£30,000). The selection of shops or other buildings as polling places, and the nomination to a few other offices, increases the patronage arising out of elections. The total cost to the city treasury of its elections was, in 1886, $222,500 (£44,500). Every second year, when there is a Federal election, additional election offices are needed; they also are treated (the appointment being vested in Federal officials) as party patronage, and cost the city an additional $64,100 (£12,800), making altogether $290,000.

"This fund of $290,000 (says Mr. Ivins) is practically used if not to purchase at least to assure and guarantee the vote of at least ten persons for each election district. The election districts will average about 300 voters, so that 3 per cent of the voters are employed in and about elections in accordance with the provisions of law as officers of the law, and the election district leader sees that they are the first men to vote and to vote right.

"The officials (city and Federal) in whose gift this patronage lies place it at the disposal of the leaders of the Machine. Now there are three Machines in New York; two Democratic, because the Democratic party, commanding a large popular majority, is divided into two factions (Tammany Hall and the County Democracy),[1] and one Republican.

"Each Machine has twenty-four district organizations, corresponding with the twenty-four Assembly districts of the city. Each Assembly district has a committee, but is actually controlled by the Assembly district leader, and the caucus of the Assembly district leaders constitutes the mainspring of the party. It is the source of all authority, and determines all questions of policy. . . . Each Assembly district leader has a representative to look after the election district, commonly called an election district captain. These men are of the utmost importance to the Machine, and an Assembly district leader strives to quarter his election district captains on the city. This he succeeds in doing sooner or later. If the Republicans are out of power in every other department, and cannot take care of 'the boys' [party workers] in any other way, they at least always have three places to dispose of which are worth $7.50 (£1 : 10s.) for five days in each election district. But they are not reduced to this sore necessity. The Democratic leader either finds a place for the friends of the Republican leader, with whom he is co-operating, or when the Republican leader is in power, it is the latter who finds places for his Democratic friends and coadjutors, for the professional or caste feeling is very strong, and politicians of all parties recognize their ultimate community of interests at all times.

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[1] There is also a third Democratic faction (Irving Hall), much weaker. It can hardly be said to have had a regular Machine, and seems to be dying.

"Sooner or later, on the pay rolls of the city, which contain 9955 names, exclusive of school-rolls, or 13,749 all told, which latter figure includes 25 aldermen and 83 chief officers, and excludes all Assembly men, senators, and national officers, at least four men are taken care of by each party all the year round in each of the 812 districts. The Machine, for the purpose of securing their services in perpetuity, thus has the city pay them as city employees. This is particularly the case with regard to the Assembly district leaders. To be sure, the money paid them out of the city, State, or National treasury cannot properly be said to be money spent in elections, but it is money spent in maintaining the solidity and perpetuity of the Machine; it keeps it alive the year round, or ready for all emergencies, and especially for the great critical emergency of the election. Without it each election would find the Machine broken and scattered, and consequently it has to be considered.

"New York City paid its Assembly district leaders last year $330,000, or an average of $4750 for each of the 72 leaders. This figure includes the estimated income of the register's office, yielding only $12,000 per year to its chief. The amount which is now being actually received by these leaders from the public treasury is $24,000. Of this amount Tammany Hall gets about $119,000, divided among 18 out of 24 of its district leaders. The County Democracy gets about $90,000, divided among 17 out of 25 of its district leaders. The Republican leaders, being in the minority party, both in the city and nation, do not fare so well; but they have hopes, or have heretofore shared the pay of loyalty. Their $22,000 is divided among 8 of their 24 leaders. It must be said, however, in order to be just, that many of the men among whom these sums are divided are honest and efficient public servants, and the city gets full value for the salaries paid them.

"The aggregate of these sums, say $242,000, may be regarded as the city's permanent investment in the Machines for leadership alone. Certainly not less than $750,000 more is invested in the same way in political captains, heelers, followers, and hangers-on, of whom it must be said also that the great majority render fair service to the city for the salaries paid them. The Machines thus supported all the year round find themselves in good condition to take up the work of organizing a campaign or conducting an election.

. . . . . .

"Prior to election day each party formally, through the action of its leaders in caucus, determines upon how much money shall be allotted by the party as such, for expenditure in each election district, to employ 'workers at the polls' as it is called. These workers at the polls are paid from $5 a day upwards, according to the fund to be drawn upon. The ballots are printed by each Machine for itself, although frequently they will employ the same printer, which has in the past sometimes produced strange results.

. . . . .

"By their command of the tickets the Assembly district leaders come into possession of the whole of the vital part of the election machinery. They could meet on the night before election and destroy the tickets, and no election could take place. It is the possession of this power which makes them valuable from the point of view of purchase and sale. Many of the Assembly district leaders in the three organizations have been able to exploit this possession so successfully and profitably that they have been able to live throughout the entire year on their income derived from the handling of the tickets. They can destroy, rebunch, fail to distribute, and what not as they please. They rarely if ever take money nominally for dealing with the tickets. It is taken or alleged to be taken for the purpose of securing the distribution or peddling of the tickets at the polls, or, as it is called, for the employment of workers. The result of this system of machinery is that, in order to compete with the professional politicians, it is necessary for any independent body of citizens to have a very complex Machine, and frequently a very expensive one. In the first place, the regular Machine is always equipped and prepared to print as well as to distribute a ticket. These are expensive matters, and the very fact of the expense in this regard alone is a practical deterrent to independent movements for reform. The Machines are always enabled to print the tickets and distribute them by means of assessments levied on candidates and office-holders."

The expense of printing and distributing tickets, and of paying the "workers" who labour for the party at elections, is defrayed out of a fund raised chiefly by assessments levied on candidates, *i.e.* by requiring the candidate to contribute a sum proportioned to the pecuniary value of the office he seeks to obtain. As explained in a preceding chapter, this is practically the purchase of a nomination. Mr. Ivins gives the following estimate of the amount raised. It varies a little from year to year, for example—"in good years, such as that after the sale by the Board of Aldermen of the Broadway franchise (the right of laying down a tramway in Broadway), the Aldermanic office was much sought after."

"An average year would show the following assessments on the basis of two candidates only running in each district, and on the basis of the mininum assessments:—

Two aldermanic candidates at $15 per district for 812 districts	$24,360
Two Assembly candidates at $10 per district for 812 districts	16,240
Two candidates for Senate or Congress at $25 per election district	40,600
Four candidates for judgeships at $10,000 each . .	40,000
Two candidates for mayor at $20,000 each . . .	40,000
Two candidates for a county office, such as sheriff, county clerk, or registrar, at $10,000	20,000
Two candidates for comptroller at $10,000 . . .	20,000
Two candidates for district attorney at $5000 . . .	10,000
Or, say a total of	$211,200

"It is a fair estimate, year in and year out, that there is distributed at each polling place in the 812 districts of the city $75 to $100 by the County Democracy, $75 to $100 by Tammany Hall, $40 to $50 by the Republicans, except in presidential years, when the distribution has been much larger, $15 by Irving Hall, and $15 by the representatives of the different independent candidates, making a minimum of $238 per election district, which for 812 election districts would give us a grand total of $216,000 or thereabouts. It is usually calculated that the assessment of candidates will cover this item."

Mr. Ivins estimates the total annual expenditure of the three Machines upon elections at $307,500 (£61,500). The difference between this sum and the $211,000 raised by assessments on candidates, is made up by assessments on office-holders, levies on public contractors, and contributions from the rich men of the party. He estimates the total annual cost of elections in an ordinary (not a presidential) year at $700,000 (£140,000).

"Of this $700,000, $290,000 is contributed by the city for legal expenses; $210,000 is derived from assessments upon candidates, and $200,000 is obtained by assessments upon office-holders and through contributions from the rich men of the various parties. This money is divided among about 45,000 men, who do the work about the polls. Of this 45,000 about 8000, or ten for each district, are employed by the city. The remaining 37,000, or forty-six for each district, are paid by the political organizations or Machines. It will be seen that it takes nearly five times as many men to do the political as it does to do the legal work."[1]

Mr. Ivins concludes as follows:—"The entire machinery of politics thus pivots round the manner of election, the legal recognition of parties, the ability of parties to levy assessments on office-seekers and office-holders, the practical exclusion, because of the expensiveness of elections, of independent nominations and work, the resulting control of the ballots by Assembly district leaders, and of the distribution of ballots to voters on election day by their subordinates and followers; in a word, this system amounts to a monopoly in the hands of the leaders of the Machines, not only of the power of nomination, but of the elective franchise itself."

Thus the creation of a number of places placed under party patronage enables the professional bosses to reward their followers, and secure a certain number of safe votes. The expense of printing and distributing ballots increases the need for a party Machine, and seems to justify its existence, and it enables the Machine to call for a large fund. The fund is raised by selling nominations and levying contributions on office-holders; and thus the Machines, having a permanent revenue, strengthen their hold on the city. To run independent candidates becomes an extremely difficult and costly enterprise. The city is put to a vast cost, because the assessments paid by candidates and office-holders fall in the long run on the city, which is forced to pay larger salaries than are needed to more officials than are needed for indifferent service, and thus to perpetuate out of its corporate purse its own enslavement. The expense, however, is the least part of the evil. Corruption is virtually legalized; and as one-fifth of the voters are under the control of the bosses, these usually have it in their power to determine elections by turning over their "voting stock" as they please, perhaps, as in some recent well-known instances, to the aspirant who promises them a substantial sum.[1]

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[1] I take this summary of Mr. Ivins's figures (having been obliged to abridge some of his calculations) from Mr. Bishop's lucid paper, in which, following up Mr. Ivins, he indicates the remedies needed.

These things being so, it is not surprising that in several American States—for the case of New York City is only an extreme instance of phenomena observable in other great cities—there have been efforts made to improve the election laws by taking the printing and distribution of ballots out of the hands of the parties, for the purpose of entrusting them to public officers, to repress bribery, and to limit the expenses incurred by or on behalf of candidates.[2] The good effects experienced in Britain from recent legislation on these subjects have encouraged American reformers to expect great benefits from such laws. A European observer, while coinciding in this view, will conceive that better election laws ought to be accompanied by a reform in the system of partisan appointments for short terms, and if possible by a diminution in the number of administrative places annually awarded at the polls.

NOTE.

I SUBJOIN specimens of "slip tickets" used at recent elections, each, it will be understood, being issued by a party and distributed to its supporters to be deposited by them in the ballot box.

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[1] When a real issue is raised there is less bribery. In the mayoralty election in New York in 1886 very little money passed "because the usually venal classes went straight for the Labour candidate and would not be bought."

[2] In 1889 there were at least nine (I think ten) States with comprehensive ballot reform laws modelled on the so-called Australian (which is really the British) system.

The first set were used in an election of State, county, and township officers in Iowa :—

REPUBLICAN STATE TICKET.

For Governor,
William Larrabee,
Of Fayette County.

For Lieutenant-Governor,
John A. T. Hull,
Of Polk County.

For Judge of the Supreme Court,
Gifford S. Robinson,
Of Buena Vista County.

For Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Henry Sabin,
Of Clinton County.

REPUBLICAN LEGISLATIVE TICKET.

For Representative, 89th District,
W. H. Redman.

REPUBLICAN COUNTY TICKET.

For County Treasurer,
O. L. Roseman.

For County Auditor,
F. W. Porter.

For Sheriff,
A. M. Hogan.

For County Superintendent of Schools,
S. W. Heath.

For County Supervisor,
J. M. Bryan.

For County Surveyor,
W. T. Grier.

For Coroner,
Horace Whitcomb.

TOWNSHIP TICKET.

For Trustee,
W. O. Willard.

For Constable (to fill vacancy),
P. A. Terrell.

DEMOCRATIC STATE TICKET.

For Governor,
T. J. Anderson,
of Marion County.

For Lieutenant-Governor,
J. M. Elder,
of Hancock County.

For Superintendent of Public Instruction,
H. W. Sawyer,
of Fremont County.

For Judge of the Supreme Court,
Chas. S. Fogg,
of Guthrie County.

DEMOCRATIC COUNTY TICKET.

For Representative,
John W. Jones.

For Treasurer,
W. T. Sharp.

For Auditor,
O. M. Wheeler.

For Sheriff,
James Hanlin.

For Surveyor,
Wm. T. Grier.

For Superintendent of Schools,
V. W. Macy.

For Coroner,
James Conger.

For Supervisor,
John A. King.

TOWNSHIP TICKET.

For Trustee,[1]

For Justice of the Peace,[1]

For Constables,[1]

UNION LABOR STATE TICKET.

For Governor,
M. J. Cain.

For Lieut.-Governor,
J. R. Sovereign.

For Supt. of Public Instruction,
S. L. Lipton.

For Judge of Supreme Court,
N. J. Jones.

COUNTY TICKET.

For Representative,
W. M. Meanor.

For Treasurer.
H. C. Buswell.

For Auditor,
C. H. Verbeck.

For Sheriff,
John Wood.

For Superintendent,
V. W. Macy.

For Supervisor,
John A. King.

For Coroner,
H. H. Legg.

For Surveyor,
W. T. Grier.

TOWNSHIP TICKET.

For Trustee,[1]

For Justice of the Peace,[1]

For Constables,[1]

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[1] The spaces left vacant are to be filled up by the voter according to his pleasure.

The following three tickets were used at an election of city officers in Boston. The original tickets are ornamental articles, executed in various kinds of type; I give here only the names of the candidates:—

Ward Twelve.

REGULAR DEMOCRATIC TICKET.

[*Here there is a portrait of Mr. O'Brien.*]

For Mayor,
Hugh O'Brien.

Copyrighted by M. J. Kiley, Printer, 7 Spring Lane, Boston.

For Street Commissioner,
Hugh E. Brady.

For School Committee,
Russell D. Elliott,
Edward C. Carrigan,
Joseph T. Duryea,
John G. Blake,
George R. Swasey,
Joseph D. Fallon,
Emily A. Fifield,
Thomas O'Grady, Jr.

For Alderman,
William P. Carrol.

For Common Council,
William H. Whitmore,
James J. Burke,
John J. Mulhall.

We hereby certify that this ballot contains only the names of the regular Democratic nominees, and is issued by the Democratic City Committee of Boston. Thomas J. Barry, President. L. J. Logan, Chairman Printing Committee.

Ward Twelve.

REGULAR REPUBLICAN TICKET.

Nathan Sawyer & Son, Printers, No. 70 State Street, Boston.

This certifies that this Ballot is the regular and genuine Ballot of the Republican Party, to be used at the Election on December 13, 1887, in the City of Boston. Jesse M. Gove, President, Republican City Committee of Boston.

For Mayor,
Thomas N. Hart.

For Street Commissioner,
Augustus N. Sampson.

For School Committee,
John W. Porter,
John G. Blake,
Russell D. Elliott,
George R. Swasey,
Charles L. Flint,
Emily A. Fifield,
Abram E. Cutter,
Joseph Stedman.

For Alderman,
Edward J. Jenkins.

For Common Council,
Cornelius F. Desmond,
Thomas F. Tracy,
James B. Hayes.

Ward Twelve.

CITIZENS' TICKET.
Dec. 13, 1887.

This ballot contains the names of the regular Citizens' Nomination (Chickering Hall Convention. A. A. Burrage, Chairman).

Copyright, 1887, by Alfred Mudge & Son, 24 Franklin Street, Boston.

For Mayor,
Thomas N. Hart.

For Street Commissioner,
Augustus N. Sampson.

For School Committee,
John G. Blake,
George R. Swasey,
Edward C. Carrigan,
Emily A. Fifield,
Joseph T. Duryea,
Charles L. Flint,
Abram E. Cutter,
Joseph Stedman.

For Alderman,
Edward J. Jenkins.

For Common Council,
John F. Mulhall,
William Bunton,
Samuel B. Doggett.

On the day when these tickets were used, there were distributed in the streets at the polling-places envelopes containing small slips of paper gummed on the back, and bearing on the front the words following:—

For Common Council, William M. Whitmore.

These were intended to be used by citizens voting the Republican or Citizens' ticket, being pasted by them over the name of one of the common council candidates on either of these tickets, so enabling the Republican or supporter of the Citizens' list to give his vote for Mr. Whitmore, while voting against the rest of the Democratic ticket.

The following three tickets were used at the election of city and school officers in the city of Cambridge, Mass., December 1887. They were all issued by organizations, but not regular party organizations. At the same election a popular vote was taken on the question whether licences for the sale of intoxicants should be granted in the city.

Shall Licences be granted for the sale of Intoxicating Liquors in this City?

NO.

Shall Licences be granted for the sale of Intoxicating Liquors in this City?

YES.

"PAY AS YOU GO" CONVENTION !

Regular Nominations.
L. M. Hannum, Chairman.
George G. Wright, Secy.

For Mayor,
William E. Russell.

For Aldermen,
Alexander Millan,
Warren Ivers,
Fred H. Holton,
Frank H. Teele,
Henry A. Doherty,
William T. Neilon,
Daniel E. Frasier,
John H. Corcoran,
Charles F. Stratton,
Solomon S. Sleeper.

For Principal Assessor,
Joshua G. Gooch.

For Assistant Assessors,
Charles H. Hunnewell,
Ward One.
William J. Marvin,
Ward Two.
George L. Mitchell,
Ward Three.
John Lennon,
Ward Four.
Thomas F. Cahir,
Ward Five.

For School Committee,
John L. Hildreth,
(For full Term)
Ward One.
Alice M. Longfellow,
(For unexpired Term)
Ward One
Alphonso E. White,
Ward Two.
Richard J. McKelleget,
Ward Three.
William H. Orcutt,
(For full Term)
Ward Four.
Moses D. Church,
(For unexpired Term)
Ward Four.
George A. Allison,
Ward Five.

WARD ONE.

For Members of the Common Council,
William H. Eveleth,
John H. H. McNamee,
George E. Carter,
William T. Piper.

WORKINGMEN'S TICKET.

1887.

For Mayor,
Edgar R. Champlin.

For Aldermen,
Edward W. Hincks,
P. Allen Lindsey,
Joseph J. Kelley,
John H. Corcoran,
Isaac McLean,
Samuel W. McDaniel,
Colin Chisholm,
William T. Neilon,
Robert B. Bancroft,
Henry A. Doherty.

For Assessor,
Joshua G. Gooch.

For Assistant Assessors,
Ward One,
James Grant.
Ward Two,
William J. Marvin.
Ward Three,
George L. Mitchell.
Ward Four,
John Lennon.
Ward Five,
Sylvanus M. Parsons.

For School Committee,
Ward One,
Emery Bemis.
Ward One,
Alice M. Longfellow,
2 years.
Ward Two,
John S. Paine.
Ward Three,
John H. Ponce.
Ward Four,
John Curtis Nichols.
Ward Four,
Moses D. Church, 1 year.
Ward Five,
George A. Allison.

For Common Council,
William H. Eveleth,
Edgar O. Kinsman,
John H. H. McNamee,
George E. Carter.

TAX PAYERS' TICKET.

1887.

[Here there is a portrait of Mr. Champlin.]

For Mayor,
Edgar R. Champlin.

For Aldermen,
Edward W. Hincks,
P. Allen Lindsey,
Joseph J. Kelley,
Daniel E. Frasier,
Isaac McLean,
Samuel W. McDaniel,
Colin Chisholm,
William T. Neilon,
Robert B. Bancroft,
Benjamin F. Atwood.

For Assessor,
Joshua G. Gooch.

For Assistant Assessors,
Ward One,
James Grant.
Ward Two,
William J. Marvin.
Ward Three,
George L. Mitchell.
Ward Four,
John Lennon.
Ward Five,
Sylvanus M. Parsons.

For School Committee,
Ward One,
Emery Bemis.
Ward One,
Alice M. Longfellow
2 years.
Ward Two,
John S. Paine.
Ward Three,
John H. Ponce.
Ward Four,
John Curtis Nichols.
Ward Four,
Moses D. Church, 1 year.
Ward Five,
George A. Allison.

For Common Council,
William H. Eveleth,
Edgar O. Kinsman,
John H. H. McNamee,
George E. Carter.

The following comments on this Cambridge election made by a Cambridge newspaper next day state the result, and explain the use of "pasters" or "stickers.

RUSSELL AND "NO!"

MAYOR RUSSELL'S MAJORITY 1917.

Five Hundred and Sixty-Six Majority for No-Licence.

"Mayor Russell received an emphatic endorsement at the polls on Tuesday and was returned to the mayor's chair by the handsome majority of 1917. No-licence also came off triumphant with the same majority as last year, viz. 566, which is a remarkable coincidence. The vote polled was unprecedentedly large, there being nearly 8200 votes cast out of a total registration of about 9500. The interest in the licence question was largely responsible for this, the temperance people having done their utmost to bring out every friend of the cause, while the licence people struggled with tremendous energy for the success of their side.

"The Russell ticket was, in the main, successful right through. The aldermanic exceptions were the election of Hincks in Ward One, in place of Ivers, and of Lindsey in Ward Two, instead of Holton. Both of these successful candidates are members of this year's board and were upon the Champlin ticket. Their election is not a surprise nor is it a victory for the Champlin ticket, as they could probably have been elected had they run independently. It will be remembered that there was a strong effort made to nominate both these men in the Russell convention. The election of General Hincks is regarded as an effective offset to the attack made upon him in the convention. He réceived a very large vote, and stood eighth in the list of those elected Alderman Lindsey defeated Alderman Holton by 78 votes only, and the majority is so small that there will be a recount. Holton's defeat is due to the free use of stickers in Ward Three. Ivers, whom General Hincks defeated, stood twelfth in the aldermanic list on the size of his vote. He was scratched badly in East Cambridge, where Hincks pasters were freely used. The largest vote cast was that for Neilon for alderman, viz. 7440. He was on both tickets. Frasier, who was also on both tickets, received 6872 votes."—*Cambridge Tribune*, 10th December 1887.

CHAPTER LXVII

CORRUPTION

No impression regarding American politics is more generally diffused in Europe than that contained in the question which the traveller who has returned from the United States becomes so weary of being asked, "Isn't everybody corrupt there?" It is an impression for which the Americans themselves, with their airy way of talking about their own country, their fondness for broad effects, their enjoyment of a good story and humorous pleasure in exaggerations generally, are largely responsible. European visitors who, generally belonging to the wealthier classes, are generally reactionary in politics, and glad to find occasion for disparaging popular government, eagerly catch up and repeat the stories they are told in New York or San Francisco. European readers take literally the highly-coloured pictures of some American novels and assume that the descriptions there given of certain men and groups "inside politics"—descriptions legitimate enough in a novel—hold true of all men and groups following that unsavoury trade. Europeans, moreover, and Englishmen certainly not less than other Europeans, have a useful knack of forgetting their own shortcomings when contemplating those of their neighbours; so you may hear men wax eloquent over the depravity of transatlantic politicians who will sail very near the wind in giving deceptive pledges to their own constituents, who will support flagrant jobs done on behalf of their own party, who will accept favours from, and dine with, and receive at their own houses, financial speculators and members of the legislature whose aims are just as base, and whose standard is just as low as those of the worst congressman that ever came to push his fortune in Washington.

I am sensible of the extreme difficulty of estimating the amount of corruption that prevails in the United States. If a native American does not know—as few do—how deep it goes nor how widely it is spread, much less can a stranger. I have, however, submitted the impressions I formed to the judgment of some fair-minded and experienced American friends, and am assured by them that these impressions are substantially correct; that is to say, that they give a view of the facts such as they have themselves formed from an observation incomparably wider than that of a European traveller could be.

The word "corruption" needs to be analyzed. It is used to cover several different kinds of political unsoundness.

One sense, the most obvious, is the taking or giving of money bribes. Another sense is the taking or giving of bribes in kind, *e.g.* the allotment of a certain quantity of stock or shares in a company, or of an interest in a profitable contract, or of a land grant. The offence is essentially the same as where a money bribe passes, but to most people it does not seem the same, partly because the taking of money is a more unmistakable selling of one's self, partly because it is usually uncertain how the bribe given in kind will turn out, and a man excuses himself by thinking that its value will depend on how he develops the interest he has obtained. A third sense of the word includes the doing of a job, *e.g.* promising a contractor that he shall have the clothing of the police or the cleaning of the city thoroughfares in return for his political support; giving official advertisements to a particular newspaper which puffs you; promising a railroad president, whose subscription to party funds is hoped for, to secure the defeat of a bill seeking to regulate the freight charges of his road or threatening its land grants. These cases shade off into those of the last preceding group, but they seem less black, because the act done is one which would probably be done anyhow by some one else from no better motive, and because the turpitude consists not in getting a private gain but in misusing a public position to secure a man's own political advancement. Hence the virtue that will resist a bribe will often succumb to these temptations.

There is also the sense in which the bestowal of places of power and profit from personal motives is said to be a corrupt exercise of patronage. Opinion has in all countries been lenient to such action when the place is given as a reward of party services, but the line between a party and a personal service cannot be easily drawn.

Then, lastly, one sometimes hears the term stretched to cover insincerity in professions of political faith. To give pledges and advocate measures which one inwardly dislikes and deems opposed to the public interest is a form of misconduct which seems far less gross than to sell one's vote or influence, but it may be, in a given instance, no less injurious to the state.

Although these two latter sets of cases do not fall within the proper meaning and common use of the word corruption, it seems worth while to mention them, because derelictions of duty which a man thinks trivial in the form with which custom has made him familiar in his own country, where perhaps they are matter for merriment, shock him when they appear in a different form in another country. They get mixed up in his mind with venality, and are cited to prove that the country is corrupt and its politicians profligate. A European who does not blame a minister for making a man governor of a colony because he has done some back-stairs parliamentary work, will be shocked at seeing in New York some one put into the custom-house in order that he may organize primaries in the district of the congressman who has got him the place. English members of Parliament condemn the senator who moves a resolution intended to "placate" the Irish vote, while they forget their own professions of ardent interest in schemes which they think economically unsound but likely to rouse the flagging interest of the agricultural labourer. Distinguishing these senses in which the word corruption is used, let us attempt to inquire how far it is chargeable on the men who compose each of the branches of the American Federal and State Government.

No President has ever been seriously charged with pecuniary corruption. The Presidents have been men very different in their moral standard, and sometimes neither scrupulous nor patriotic, but money or money's worth they have never touched for themselves, great as the temptations must have been to persons with small means and heavy expenses. They have doubtless often made bad appointments from party motives, have sought to strengthen themselves by the use of their patronage, have talked insincerely and tolerated jobs; but all these things have also been done within the last thirty years by sundry English, French, and Italian prime ministers, some of whom have since been canonized.

The standard of honour maintained by the Presidents has not always been maintained by the leading members of recent administrations, several of whom have been suspected of complicity in railroad jobs, and even in frauds upon the revenue. They may not have, probably they did not, put any part of the plunder into their own pockets, but they have winked at the misdeeds of their subordinates, and allowed the party funds to be replenished, not by direct malversation, yet by rendering services to influential individuals or corporations which a strict sense of public duty would have forbidden. On the other hand, it is fair to say that there seems to be no case since the war—although there was a bad case in President Buchanan's Cabinet just before the war—in which a member of the Cabinet has received money, or its equivalent, as the price of either an executive act or an appointment, while inferior officials, who have been detected in so doing (and this occasionally happens), have been dismissed and disgraced.[1]

Next, as to Congress. It is particularly hard to discover the truth about Congress, for few of the abundant suspicions excited and accusations brought against senators or members of the House have been, or could have been, sifted to the bottom. Among four hundred men there will be the clean and the unclean. The opportunities for private gain are large, the chances of detection small; few members keep their seats for three or four successive congresses, and one half are changed every two years, so the temptation to make hay while the sun shines is all the stronger.

There are several forms which temptation takes in the Federal legislature. One is afforded by the position a member holds on a committee. All bills and many resolutions are referred to some one of the committees, and it is in the committee-room that their fate is practically decided. In a small body each member has great power, and the exercise of power (as observed already)[2] is safeguarded by little responsibility. He may materially advance a bill promoted by an influential manufacturer, or financier, or railroad president. He may obstruct it. He may help, or may oppose, a bill directed against a railroad or other wealthy corporation, which has something to gain or lose from Federal legislation.[3] No small part of the business of Congress is what would be called in England private business; and although the individual railroads which come directly into relation with the Federal government are not numerous,—the great transcontinental lines which have received land grants or other subventions are the most important,—questions affecting these roads do frequently come up and involve large amounts of money. The tariff on imports opens another enormous sphere in which legislative intervention affects private pecuniary interests; for it makes all the difference to many sets of manufacturers whether duties on certain classes of goods are raised, or maintained, or lowered. Hence the doors of Congress are besieged by a whole army of commercial or railroad men and their agents, to whom, since they have come to form a sort of profession, the name of Lobbyists is given.[1] Many congressmen are personally interested, and lobby for themselves among their colleagues from the vantage-ground of their official positions.

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[1] The so-called Whisky Ring of 1875 and the Star Route gang of more recent times are perhaps the most conspicuous instances of misconduct in the civil service.

[2] See Chapter XV. in Vol. I. on the Committtees of Congress.

[3] I remember to have heard of the governor of a western Territory who, when

Thus a vast deal of solicitation and bargaining goes on. Lobbyists offer considerations for help in passing a bill which is desired or in stopping a bill which is feared. Two members, each of whom has a bill to get through, or one of whom desires to prevent his railroad from being interfered with while the other wishes the tariff on an article which he manufactures kept up, make a compact by which each aids the other. This is Log-rolling: You help me to roll my log, which is too heavy for my unaided strength, and I help you to roll yours. Sometimes a member brings in a bill directed against some railroad or other great corporation, merely in order to levy blackmail upon it. This is technically called a Strike. An eminent railroad president told me that for some years a certain senator regularly practised this trick. When he had brought in his bill he came straight to New York, called at the railroad offices, and asked the president what he would give him to withdraw the bill. That the Capitol and the hotels at Washington are a nest of such intrigues and machinations, while Congress is sitting, is admitted on all hands; but how many of the members are tainted no one can tell. Sometimes when money passes it goes not to the member

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he came east, used to borrow money from the head of a great railway which traversed his Territory, saying he would oblige the railway when it found occasion to ask him. His power of obliging included the right to veto bills passed by the Territorial legislature. This governor was an ex-boss of an Eastern State whom his party had provided for by bestowing the governorship on him.

[1] See *ante*, Note (B) to Chapter XVI. in Appendix to Vol. I.

of Congress himself, but to some Boss who can and does put pressure on him. Sometimes, again, a lobbyist will demand a sum for the purpose of bribing a member who is really honest, and, having ascertained that the member is going to vote in the way desired, will keep the sum in his own pocket. Bribery often takes the form of a transfer of stocks or shares, nor have even free passes on railroads been scorned by some of the more needy legislators. The abuse on this head had grown so serious that the bestowal of passes on inter-State lines was forbidden by statute in 1887.[1] In the end of 1883 portions of a correspondence in the years 1876-78 between Mr. Huntington, one of the proprietors and directors of the Central Pacific Railroad, who then represented that powerful corporation at Washington, and one of his agents in California, were published; and from these it appeared that the company, whose land grants were frequently threatened by hostile bills, and which was exposed to the competition of rival enterprises, which (because they were to run through Territories) Congress was asked to sanction, defended itself by constant dealings with senators and representatives—dealings in the course of which it offered money and bonds to those whose support it needed. Mr. Huntington comments freely on the character of various members of both Houses, and describes not only his own operations, but those of Mr. Scott, his able and active opponent, who had the great advantage of being able to command passes on some railways running out of Washington.[2]

It does not seem, from what one hears on the spot, that money is often given, or, I should rather say, it seems that the men to

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[1] All lines traversing the territory of more than one State are subject to the power of Congress to "regulate commerce." As to free passes, see the instructive remarks of the Inter-State Commerce Commission in their First Report.

[2] In one letter Mr. Huntington uses a graphic and characteristic metaphor: "Scott has switched off (*i.e.* off the Central Pacific track and on to his own railroad track) Senators S. and W., but you know they can be switched back with the proper arrangements when they are wanted." In another he observes (1878), "I think in all the world's history never before was such a wild set of demagogues honoured by the name of Congress. We have been hurt sore, and some of the worst bills have been defeated; but we cannot stand many such Congresses."

The recently-issued Report of the U.S. Pacific Railway Commission says of these transactions, "There is no room for doubt that a large portion of the sum of $4,818,000 was used for the purpose of influencing legislation and of preventing the passage of measures deemed to be hostile to the interests of the company, and for the purpose of influencing elections. It is impossible to read the extracts whom it is given are few in number. But considerations of some kind pretty often pass,[1] so that corruption in both the first and second of the above senses must be admitted to exist and to affect a portion, though only a small portion of Congress.[2] A position of some delicacy is occupied by eminent lawyers who sit in Congress and receive retainers from powerful corporations whose interests may be affected by congressional legislation, retainers for which they are often not expected to render any forensic service.[3] There are various ways in which members of Congress can use their position to advance their personal interests. They have access to the executive, and can obtain favours from it; not so much because the executive cares what legislation they pass, for it has little to do with legislation, but that the members of the Cabinet are on their promotion, and anxious to stand well with persons whose influence covers any considerable local area, who may perhaps be even able to control the delegation of a State in a nominating convention. Hence a senator or congressman may now and then sway the executive towards a course it would not otherwise have taken, and the resulting gain to himself, or to some person who has invoked his influence, may be an illicit gain, probably not in the form of money, but as a job out of which something may be made. Again, it has been hitherto an important part of a member's duty to obtain places for his constituents in the Federal civil service. There are about 120,000 of such places. Here is a vast field, if not for pecuniary gain, for appointments are not sold, yet for the gratification of personal and party interests. Nor does the mischief stop with the making of inferior appointments, for the habit of ignoring public duty which is formed blunts men's sense of honour, and makes them more apt to yield to some grosser form of temptation. Similar causes produced similar effects during last cen-

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from the letters written by Mr. Huntington himself without reaching the conclusion that large sums were expended by him in efforts to defeat the passage of various bills pending in Congress."—Report, p. 84.

[1] The president of a great Western railroad told me that members of Congress used to come to the company's office to buy its land, and on seeing the price-list would say, "But isn't there a discount? Surely you can give the land cheaper to a friend. You know I shall be your friend in Congress," and so forth.

[2] Among the investigations which disclosed the existence of bribery among members of Congress, the most prominent are those of the Credit Mobilier and the Pacific Mail cases.

[3] See Vol. I. p. 117, note.

tury in England, and it is said that the French legislature now suffers from the like malady, members of the Chamber being incessantly occupied in wheedling or threatening the executive into conferring places or decorations upon their constituents.

The rank and file of the Federal civil service attain a level of integrity as high as that of England or Germany. The State civil service is comparatively small, and in most States one hears little said against its purity. Taking one part of the country with another, a citizen who has business with a government department, such as the customs or excise, or with a State treasurer's office, or with a poor law or school authority, has as much expectation of finding honest men to deal with as he has of finding trustworthy agents to conduct a piece of private commercial business. Instances of dishonesty are more noticed when they occur in a public department, but I do not think they are more frequent.

It is hard to form a general judgment regarding the State legislatures, because they differ so much among themselves. Those of Massachusetts, Vermont, and several of the North-western States, such as Michigan, are pure, *i.e.* the members who would take a bribe are excessively few, and those who would push through a job for some other sort of consideration a small fraction of the whole.[1] On the other hand, New York and Pennsylvania have so bad a name that people profess to be surprised when a good act passes, and a strong governor is kept constantly at work vetoing bills corruptly obtained or mischievous in themselves. Several causes have contributed to degrade the legislature of New York State. It is comparatively small in number, the Assembly having but 128 members, the Senate 32. It includes, besides New York and Brooklyn, several smaller ring-governed cities whence bad members come. It has to deal with immensely powerful corporations, such as the great railroads which traverse it on their way to the West. These corporations are the bane of State politics, for their management is secret, being usually in the hands of one or two capitalists, and their wealth is so great that they can offer bribes at which ordinary virtue grows pale. There are many honest men in the Assembly, and a few are rich men who do not need a

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[1] The Territorial legislatures vary greatly from time to time: they are sometimes quite pure; another election under some demagogic impulse may bring in a crowd of mischievous adventurers.

douceur, but the proportion of tainted men is large enough to pollute the whole lump. Of what the bribe-taker gets he keeps a part for himself, using the rest to buy the doubtful votes of purchaseable people; to others he promises his assistance when they need it, and when by such log-rolling he has secured a considerable backing, he goes to the honest men, among whom, of course, he has a considerable acquaintance, puts the matter to them in a plausible way—they are probably plain farmers from the rural districts—and so gains his majority. Each great corporation keeps an agent at Albany, the capital of the State, who has authority to buy off the promoters of hostile bills, and to employ the requisite professional lobbyists. Such a lobbyist, who may or may not be himself a member, bargains for a sum down, $5000 or $10,000 (£1000 or £2000), in case he succeeds in getting the bill in question passed or defeated, as the case may be; and when the session ends he comes for his money, and no questions are asked. This sort of thing now goes on, or has lately gone on, in several other States, though nowhere on so grand a scale. Virginia, Maryland, California, Illinois, Missouri, are all more or less impure; Louisiana is said to be now worse than New York. But the lowest point was reached in some of the Southern States shortly after the war, when, the negroes having received the suffrage, the white inhabitants were still excluded as rebels, and the executive government was conducted by Northern carpet-baggers under the protection of Federal troops. In some States the treasury was pilfered; huge State debts were run up; negroes voted farms to themselves; all kinds of robbery and jobbery went on unchecked. South Carolina, for instance, was a perfect Tartarus of corruption, as much below the Hades of Illinois or Missouri as the heaven of ideal purity is above the ordinary earth of Boston and Westminster.[1] In its legislature there was an old darkey, jet black and with venerable white hair, a Methodist preacher, and influential among his brother statesmen, who kept a stall for legislation, where he dealt in statutes at prices varying from $100 to $400. Since those days there has been a peaceful revolution for the better at the South, but some of its legislative bodies have still much leeway to make up.

Of city governments I have spoken in previous chapters. They begin to be bad when the population begins to exceed

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[1] *Τόσσον ἔνερθ' Αΐδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης.*

100,000, and includes a large proportion of recent immigrants. They are generally pure in smaller places, that is to say, they are as pure as those of an average English, French, or German city.

The form which corruption usually takes in the populous cities is the sale of "franchises" (especially monopolies in the use of public thoroughfares),[1] the jobbing of contracts, and the bestowal of places upon personal adherents, both of them faults not unknown in large European municipalities, and said to be specially rife in Paris, though no rifer than under Louis Napoleon, when the reconstruction of the city under Prefect Haussman provided unequalled opportunities for the enrichment of individuals at the public expense. English vestries, local boards, and even, though much more rarely, town councils, do some quiet jobbery. No European city has, however, witnessed scandals approaching those of New York or Philadelphia, where the public till has been robbed on a vast scale, and accounts have been systematically cooked to conceal the thefts.

Last of all we come to the ordinary voter and the question of bribery at elections. Here, again, there is the widest possible difference between different regions of the country. The greater part of the Union is pure, as pure as Scotland, where from 1868 till 1885 there was only one election petition for alleged bribery. Other parts are no better than the small boroughs of Southern England were before the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883.[2] No place, however, not even the poorest ward in New York City, sinks below the level of such constituencies as Yarmouth, Sandwich, or Canterbury were in England. Bribery is not practised in America in the same way as it was recently in some parts of England, or as anciently at Rome, by distributing small sums among a large mass of poor electors, or even, as in many English boroughs, among a section of voters (not always the poorest) known to be venal, and accustomed to reserve their votes till shortly before the close of the poll. The American practice has been to give sums of from $20 to $50 (£4 to £10) to an active local "worker," who undertakes to bring up a certain number of voters, perhaps twenty or thirty, whom he "owns" or can get at. He is not required to account for the money, and probably spends very little of it in direct bribes, though something in drinks to the lower sort of elector. This kind of expenditure belongs rather to the category of paid canvassing than of bribery, yet sometimes the true European species occurs. In a New Hampshire town not long ago, $10 (£2) were paid to each of two hundred doubtful voters. In some districts of New York the friends of a candidate will undertake, in case he is returned, to pay the rent of the poorest voters who occupy tenement houses, and the candidate subsequently makes up the amount.[1] The expenses of congressional and presidential elections are often heavy, and though the larger part goes in organization and demonstrations, meetings, torchlight processions, and so forth, a part is likely to go in some illicit way. A member of Congress for a poor district in a great city told me that his expenses ran from $8000 up to $10,000 (£1600 to £2000), which is just about what a parliamentary contest used to cost in an English borough constituency of equal area. In America the number of voters in a constituency is more than five times as great as it now is in England, but the official expenses of polling-booths and clerks are not borne by the candidate. In a corrupt district along the Hudson River above New York I have heard of as much as $50,000 (£10,000) being spent at a single congressional election, when in some other districts of the State the expenses did not exceed $2000 (£400). In a presidential election great sums are spent in doubtful, or, as they are called, "pivotal" States. Indiana was "drenched with money" in 1880, much of it contributed by great corporations, yet one is told that little of this went in bribery. How much ever does go it is the harder to determine, because elections are rarely impeached on this ground, both parties tacitly agreeing that bygones shall be bygones. The election of 1888 was one of the worst on record, so large was the expenditure in doubtful States. Till that year well-informed Americans did not consider bribery at elections to be a growing evil in their country, and even now, serious as it is, they think it not comparable for the mischief it does either to Bossism or to election frauds. Probably the disease is no more diffused than in England before 1883. In most rural districts it is practically unknown: the only thing approaching it is the farmer's notion, that when he drives in five or six miles to a polling place he ought to get his dinner for nothing.

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[1] The most notorious recent case is the sale by the New York aldermen of the right to lay a tramway in Broadway. Nearly the whole number were indicted and some were punished by imprisonment.

[2] After the election of 1880 no less than 95 petitions were presented impugning elections on the ground of some form of corruption, and many were sustained. After the election of 1886 there was not a single petition. This improvement must, however, be in great measure ascribed to the Redistribution Act of 1885, which destroyed the small boroughs.

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[1] At a recent election in Brooklyn a number of coloured voters sat (literally) on the fence in front of the polling booths, waiting to be bought, but were disappointed, the parties having agreed not to buy them.

On a review of the whole matter, the following conclusions may be found not very wide of the truth.

Bribery exists in Congress, but is confined to a few members, say five per cent of the whole number. It is more common in the legislatures of a few, but only a few States, practically absent from the higher walks of the Federal civil service and among the chief State officials, rare among the lower officials, unknown among the Federal judges, rare among State judges.[1]

The taking of other considerations than money, such as a share in a lucrative contract, or a railway pass, or a "good thing" to be secured for a friend, prevails among legislators to a somewhat larger extent. Being less coarsely palpable than the receipt of money, it is thought more venal. One may roughly conjecture that from fifteen to twenty per cent of the members of Congress or of an average State legislature would allow themselves to be influenced by inducements of this kind.

Malversation of public funds occurs occasionally in cities, rarely among Federal or State officers.

Jobbery of various kinds, *i.e.* the misuse of a public position for the benefit of individuals, is pretty frequent. It is often disguised as a desire to render some service to the party, and the same excuse is sometimes found for a misappropriation of public money.

Patronage is usually dispensed with a view to party considerations or to win personal support. But this remark is equally true of England and France, the chief difference being that owing to the short terms and frequent removals the quantity of patronage is relatively greater in the United States.

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[1] One hears senators often charged with buying themselves into the Senate; but, so far as I could ascertain, it rarely happens that a candidate for the Senate bribes members of the State legislature, though probably he often makes heavy contributions to the party election fund, out of which the election expenses of the members of the party dominant in the State legislature are largely defrayed.

If this is not a bright picture, neither is it so dark as that which most Europeans have drawn, and which the loose language of many Americans sanctions. What makes it seem dark is the contrast between the deficiencies which the government shows in this respect, and the excellence, on the one hand of the frame of the Constitution, on the other of the tone and sentiment of the people. The European reader may, however, complain that the picture is vague in its outlines. I cannot make it more definite. The facts are not easy to ascertain, and it is hard to say what standard one is to apply to them. In the case of America men are inclined to apply an ideal standard, because she is a republic, professing to have made a new departure in politics, and setting before her a higher ideal than most European monarchies. Yet it must be remembered that in a new and large country, where the temptations are enormous and the persons tempted have many of them no social position to forfeit, the conditions are not the most favourable to virtue. If, recognizing the fact that the path of the politician is in all countries thickly set with snares, we leave ideals out of sight and try America by an actual standard, we shall find that while her legislative bodies fall below the level of purity maintained in England and Germany, probably also in France and Italy, her Federal and State administration, in spite of the evils flowing from an uncertain tenure, is not, in point of integrity, at this moment markedly inferior to the administrations of most European countries.

CHAPTER LXVIII

THE WAR AGAINST BOSSDOM

It must not be supposed the inhabitants of Ring-ruled cities tamely submit to their tyrants. The Americans are indeed, what with their good nature and what with the preoccupation of the most active men in their private business, a long-suffering people. But patience has its limits, and when a Ring has pushed paternal government too far, an insurrection may break out. Rings have generally the sense to scent the coming storm, and to avert it by making two or three good nominations, and promising a reduction of taxes. Sometimes, however, they hold on their course fearless and shameless, and then the storm breaks upon them.

There are several forms which a reform movement or other popular rising takes. The recent history of great cities supplies examples of each. The first form is an attack upon the primaries. They are the key of a Ring's position, and when they have been captured their batteries can be turned against the Ring itself. When an assault upon the Bosses is resolved upon, the first thing is to form a committee. It issues a manifesto calling on all good citizens to attend the primaries of their respective wards, and there vote for delegates opposed to the Ring. The newspapers take the matter up, and repeat the exhortation. As each primary is held, on the night fixed by the ward committee of the regular (that is the Ring) organization, some of the reformers appear at it, and propose a list of delegates, between whom and the Ring's list a vote of the members of the primary is taken This may succeed in some of the primaries, but rarely in a majority of them; because (as explained in a previous chapter) the rolls seldom or never include the whole party voters of the ward, having been prepared by the professionals in their own interest. Sometimes only one-fourth or one-fifth of the voters are on the primary roll, and these are of course the men on whom the Ring can rely. Hence, even if the good citizens of the district, obeying the call of patriotism and the Reform Committee, present themselves at the primary, they may find so few of their number on the roll that they will be outvoted by the ringsters. But the most serious difficulty is the apathy of the respectable, steady-going part of the population to turn out in sufficient numbers. They have their engagements of business or pleasure to attend to, or it is a snowy night and their wives persuade them to stay indoors. The well-conducted men of small means are an eminently domestic class, who think they do quite enough for the city and the nation if they vote at the polls. It is still more difficult to induce the rich to interest themselves in confessedly disagreeable work. They find themselves at a primary in strange and uncongenial surroundings. Accustomed to be treated with deference in their counting-house or manufactory, they are jostled by a rough crowd, and find that their servants or workmen are probably better known and more influential than they are themselves. They recognize by sight few of the persons present, for, in a city, acquaintance does not go by proximity of residence, and are therefore at a disadvantage for combined action, whereas the professional politicians are a regiment where every private in each company knows his fellow-private and obeys the officers. Hence, the best, perhaps the only chance of capturing a primary is by the action of a group of active young men who will take the trouble of organizing the movement by beating up the members of the party who reside in the district, and bearding the local bosses in the meeting. It is a rough and toilsome piece of work, but young men find a compensation in the fun which is to be had out of the fight; and when a victory is won, theirs is the credit. To carry a few primaries is only the first step. The contest has to be renewed in the convention, where the odds are still in favour of the professionals, who "know the ropes" and may possibly outwit even a majority of Reform delegates. The managing committee is in their hands, and they can generally secure a chairman in their interests. Experience has accordingly shown that this method of attacking the Machine very rarely succeeds; and though the duty of attending the primaries continues to be preached, the advice shares the fate of most sermons. Once in a way, the respectable voter will rouse himself, but he cannot be trusted to continue to do so year after year. He is like those citizen-soldiers of ancient Greece who would turn out for a summer inroad into the enemy's country, but refused to keep the field through the autumn and winter.

A second expedient, which may be tried instead of the first, or resorted to after the first has been tried and failed, is to make an independent list of nominations and run a separate set of candidates. If this strategy be resolved on, the primaries are left unheeded; but when the election approaches, a committee is formed which issues a list of candidates for some or all of the vacant offices in opposition to the "regular" list issued by the party convention, and conducts the agitation on their behalf. This saves all trouble in primaries or conventions, but involves much trouble in elections, because a complete campaign corps has to be organized, and a campaign fund raised.[1] Moreover, the average voter, not having followed politics closely enough to comprehend his true duty and interest, and yielding to his established party habits, inclines, especially in State and Federal elections, to vote the "regular ticket." He starts with a certain prejudice against those who are "troubling Israel" by dividing the party, because he sees that in all probability the result will be not to carry the Independent ticket, but to let in the candidates of the opposite party. Hence the bolting Independents can rarely hope to carry so large a part of their own party with them as to win the election. The result of their action will rather be to bring in the candidates of the other side, who may be no better than the men on the ticket of their own Ring. Accordingly reformers have become reluctant to take this course, for though it has the merit of relieving their feelings, it exposes them to odium, involves great labour, and effects nothing more than may be obtained by one or other of the two methods which I have next to describe.

The third plan is to abstain from voting for the names on your party ticket to whom you object. This is Scratching.

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[1] "To run an anti-machine candidate for mayor it is necessary to organize a new machine at an expense of from $60.000 to $100,000 (£12,000 to £20,000), with a chance of his being 'sold out' then by the men who are hired to distribute his ballots."—Mr. J. B. Bishop in the paper on "Money in City Elections," already cited. Some one has said that the difference between running as a regular candidate and running on your own account as an independent candidate, is like the difference between travelling by railway, and making a new railway of your own to travel by

You are spared the trouble of running candidates of your own, but your abstention, if the parties are nearly balanced, causes the defeat of the bad candidates whom your own party puts forward, and brings in those of the other party. This is a good plan when you want to frighten a Ring, and yet cannot get the more timid reformers to go the length of voting either an independent ticket or the ticket of the other party. It is employed when a Ring ticket is not bad all through, but contains some fair names mingled with some names of corrupt or dangerous men. You scratch the latter and thereby cause their defeat; the others, receiving the full strength of the party, are carried.

If, however, indignation against a dominant Ring has risen so high as to overcome the party predilections of ordinary citizens, if it is desired to administer condign and certain punishment to those who have abused the patience of the people, the reformers will take a more decided course. They urge their friends to vote the ticket of the opposite party, either entire or at least all the better names on it, thus ensuring its victory. This is an efficient method, but a desperate one, for you put into power a Ring of the party which you have been opposing all your life, and whose members are possibly quite as corrupt as those of the Ring which controls your own party. The gain you look for is not therefore the immediate gain of securing better city government, but the ultimate gain of raising the general practice of politics by the punishment of evil-doers. Hence, whenever there is time to do so, the best policy is for the reformers to make overtures to the opposite party, and induce them by the promise of support to nominate better candidates than they would have nominated if left to themselves. A group of Bolters afraid of being called traitors to their party, will shrink from this course; and if they are weak in numbers, their approaches may be repulsed by the opposition. But the scheme is always worth trying, and has several times been crowned with success. By it the reforming party among the Democrats of Baltimore recently managed to defeat their Ring in an election of judges. They settled in conference with the Republicans a non-partisan ticket, which gave the Republicans (who were a minority) a better share of the bench than they could have got by fighting alone, and which substituted respectable Democrats for the objectionable names on the regular Democratic ticket. A similar combination of the reform Republicans in Philadelphia with the Democrats, who in that city are in a permanent minority, led to the defeat of the Republican Gas Ring (whereof more in a later chapter). This method has the advantage of saving expense, because the bolters can use the existing machinery of the opposite party, which organizes the meetings, circulates the literature, prints and distributes the ballots. It is on the whole the most promising strategy, but needs tact as well as vigour on the part of the Independent leaders. Nor will the opposite party always accept the proffered help. Sometimes it fears the gifts of the Greeks, sometimes it hopes to win unhelped, and therefore will not sacrifice any of its candidates to the scruples of the reformers. Sometimes its chiefs dislike the idea of reform so heartily as to prefer defeat at the hands of a Ring of the other party to a victory which might weaken the hold of professionals upon the Machine and lead to a general purification of politics.

If the opposite party refuses the overtures of the reformers who are "kicking" against their own Machine, or will not purify the ticket sufficiently to satisfy them, there remains the chance of forming a third party out of the best men of both the regular organizations, and starting a third set of candidates. This is an extension and improvement of the first of the four enumerated methods, and has the greater promise of success because it draws votes from both parties instead of from one only. It has been frequently employed of late years in cities, generally of the second order, by running what is called a "Citizens' Ticket."

Of course bolters who desert their own party at a city election do not intend permanently to separate themselves from it. Probably they will vote its ticket at the next State or presidential election. Their object is to shake the power of their local boss, and if they cannot overthrow the Ring, at least to frighten it into better behaviour. This they often effect. After the defeat of some notorious candidates, the jobs are apt to be less flagrant. But such repentances are like those of the sick wolf in the fable, and experience proves that when the public vigilance has been relaxed, the ringsters of both parties return to their wallowing in the mire.

The difficulties of getting good citizens to maintain a steady war against the professionals have been found so great, and in particular the attempt to break their control of the primaries has so often failed, that remedies have been sought in legislation. Several States have extended the penalties attached to bribery and frauds at public elections to similar offences committed at primaries and nominating conventions, deeming these acts to be, as in fact they are, scarcely less hurtful to the community when practised at purely voluntary and private gatherings than when employed at elections.[1] Statutes have also been passed in some States for regulating the proceedings at primaries. For instance, Ohio provides that a certain notice shall be published of the holding of a primary; that judges, clerks, and supervisors of the election of delegates shall be sworn; that any qualified elector may challenge any one claiming to vote; that the asking, or giving, or taking a bribe, or an attempt to intimidate, shall be punishable offences, and disqualify the offending party from voting. Similar provisions protect the delegate to a convention from the candidate, the candidate from the delegate, and the party from both. Minnesota has just enacted a set of even more stringent regulations, making the annulment or destruction of any ballots cast at a party meeting held for the purpose of choosing either candidates or delegates, or the wrongfully preventing persons from voting who are entitled to vote, or personation, or "any other fraud or wrong tending to defeat or affect the result of the election," a misdemeanour punishable by a fine not exceeding $3000 (£600), or three years' imprisonment, or both penalties combined.[2] Astonishing as it seems to a European that legislation should not only recognize parties, but should actually attempt to regulate the internal proceedings of a political party at a perfectly voluntary gathering of its own members, a gathering whose resolutions no one is bound to obey or regard in any way, some of the wisest American publicists conceive that this plan offers the best chance of reforming the Machine and securing the freedom of the voter.[3] Not much success has been hitherto attained; but the statutes have, in some cases (*e.g.* California), been expressed to apply only where the political party seeks to apply them, and the experiment has not been tried long enough to enable a judgment on it to be formed. That it should be tried at all is a phenomenon to be seriously pondered by those who are accustomed to point to America as the country where the principle of leaving things alone has worked most widely and usefully; and it is the strongest evidence of the immense vigour of these party organizations, and of the authority their nominations exert, that reformers, foiled in the effort to purify them by voluntary action, should be driven to invoke the arm of the law.

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[1] Says Mr. Bernheim: "The party elections in New York [*i.e.* choice of candidates] are all now representative and conducted with an equal disregard of law and honesty. . . . On the purity of primary elections depend good nominations; and quite as truly the efficiency of public officials; for the party label in almost every case commends the candidate to the electors, his trade-mark is voted for and not his character."—*Political Science Quarterly* for March 1888.

[2] Statutes of Minnesota of 1887, chap. iv. §§ 99-105. It is significant that these sections apply only to cities of 5000 inhabitants or upwards.

[3] "A Pennsylvania lawyer tells me, 'I have just closed a protracted trial of an election fraud case under our primary laws with a conviction of the entire board of election officers.'"—Bernheim, *ut supra.*

The struggle between the professional politicians and the reformers has been going on in the great cities, with varying fortune, for the last twenty years. As illustrations of the incidents that mark it will be found in subsequent chapters, I will here say only that in the onslaughts on the Rings, which most elections bring round, the reformers, though they seldom capture the citadel, often destroy some of the outworks, and frighten the garrison into a more cautious and moderate use of their power. After an election in which an "Independent ticket" has received considerable support, the bosses are disposed to make better nominations, and, as an eminent New York professional (the late Mr. Fernando Wood) said, "to pander a little to the moral sense of the community." Every campaign teaches the reformers where the enemy's weak points lie, and gives them more of that technical skill which has hitherto been the strength of the professionals. It is a warfare of volunteers against disciplined troops, but the volunteers, since they are fighting for the taxpayers at large, would secure so great a preponderance of numbers, if they could but move the whole body of respectable citizens, that their triumph will evidently depend in the long run upon their own constancy and earnestness. If their zeal does not flag; if they do not suffer themselves to be disheartened by frequent repulses; if, not relying too absolutely on any one remedy, they attack the enemy at every point, using every social and educational as well as legal appliance, the example of their disinterested public spirit, as well as the cogency of their arguments, cannot fail to tell on the voters; and no Boss, however adroit, no Ring, however strongly entrenched, will be able to withstand them. The war, however, will not be over when the enemy has been routed. Although much may be done by legislative remedies, such as new election laws, new provisions against corruption, a reconstruction of the frame of city government, and a purification of the civil service, there are certain internal and, so to speak, natural causes of mischief, the removal of which will need patience and unremitting diligence. In great cities—for it is throughout chiefly of cities that we have to think—a large section of the voters will, for many years to come, be comparatively ignorant of the methods of free government which they are set to work. They will be ignorant even of their own interests, failing to perceive that wasteful expenditure injures those who do not pay direct taxes, as well as those who do. Retaining some of the feelings which their European experience has tended to produce, they will distrust appeals coming from the more cultivated classes, and be inclined to listen to loose-tongued demagogues. Once they have joined a party they will vote at the bidding of its local leaders, however personally unworthy.[1] While this section remains numerous, Rings and Bosses will always have materials ready to their hands. There is, however, reason to expect that with the progress of time this section will become relatively smaller. And even now, large as it is, it could be overthrown and bossdom extirpated, were the better citizens to maintain unbroken through a series of elections that unity and vigour of action of which they have at rare moments, and under the impulse of urgent duty, shown themselves capable. In America, as everywhere else in the world, the commonwealth suffers more often from apathy or short-sightedness in the upper classes, who ought to lead, than from ignorance or recklessness in the humbler classes, who are generally ready to follow when they are wisely and patriotically led.

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[1] Says Mr. Roosevelt: "Voters of the labouring class in the cities are very emotional: they value in a public man what we are accustomed to consider virtues only to be taken into account when estimating private character. Thus if a man is open-handed and warm-hearted, they consider it as being a fair offset to his being a little bit shaky when it comes to applying the eighth commandment to affairs of state. I have more than once heard the statement 'He is very liberal to the poor,' advanced as a perfectly satisfactory answer to the charge that a certain public man was corrupt." He adds, "In the lower wards (of New York City), where there is a large vicious population, the condition of politics is often fairly appalling, and the [local] boss is generally a man of grossly immoral public and private character. In these wards many of the social organizations with which the leaders are obliged to keep on good terms are composed of criminals or of the relatives and associates of criminals. . . . The president of a powerful semi-political association was by profession a burglar, the man who received the goods he stole was an alderman. Another alderman was elected while his hair was still short from a term in the State prison. A school trustee had been convicted of embezzlement and was the associate of criminals."—*Century Magazine* for Nov. 1886.

CHAPTER LXIX

NOMINATING CONVENTIONS

In every American election there are two acts of choice, two periods of contest. The first is the selection of the candidate from within the party by the party; the other is the struggle between the parties for the place. Frequently the former of these is more important, more keenly fought over, than the latter, for there are many districts in which the predominance of one party is so marked that its candidate is sure of success, and therefore the choice of a candidate is virtually the choice of the officer or representative.

Preceding chapters have described the machinery which exists for choosing and nominating a candidate. The process is similar in every State of the Union, and through all elections to office, from the lowest to the highest, from that of common councilman for a city ward up to that of President of the United States. But, of course, the higher the office, and the larger the area over which the election extends, the greater are the efforts made to secure the nomination, and the hotter the passions it excites.

Like most political institutions, the system of nominating the President by a popular convention is the result of a long process of evolution.

In the first two elections, those of 1789[1] and 1792, there was no need for nominations of candidates, because the whole nation wished and expected George Washington to be elected. So too, when in 1796 Washington declared his retirement, the dominant feeling of one party was for John Adams, that of the other for

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[1] The President is now always chosen on the Tuesday after the first Monday in the November of an even year, whose number is a multiple of four (*e.g.* 1880, 1884, 1888), and comes into office in the spring following; but the first election was held in the beginning of 1789, because the Constitution had been then only just adopted.

Thomas Jefferson, and nobody thought of setting out formally what was so generally understood.

In 1800, however, the year of the fourth election, there was somewhat less unanimity. The prevailing sentiment of the Federalists went for re-electing Adams, and the small conclave of Federalist members of Congress which met to promote his interest was deemed scarcely necessary. The Republicans, however (for that was the name then borne by the party which now calls itself Democratic), while united in desiring to make Jefferson President, hesitated as to their candidate for the vice-presidency, and a meeting of Republican members of Congress was therefore called to recommend Aaron Burr for this office. It was a small meeting and a secret meeting, but it is memorable not only as the first congressional caucus but as the first attempt to arrange in any way a party nomination.

In 1804 a more regular gathering for the same purpose was held. All the Republican members of Congress were summoned to meet; and they unanimously nominated Jefferson for President, and George Clinton of New York for Vice-President. So in 1808 nearly all the Republican majority in both Houses of Congress met and formally nominated Madison and Clinton. The same course was followed in 1812, and again in 1816. But the objections which were from the first made to this action of the party in Congress, as being an arrogant usurpation of the rights of the people—for no one dreamed of leaving freedom to the presidential electors—gained rather than lost strength on each successive occasion, so much so that in 1820 the few who met made no nomination,[1] and in 1824, out of the Democratic members of both Houses of Congress summoned to the "nominating caucus," as it was called, only sixty-six attended, many of the remainder having announced their disapproval of the practice.[2] The nominee of this caucus came in only third at the polls, and this failure gave the *coup de grâce* to a plan which the levelling tendencies of the time, and the disposition to refer everything to the arbitrament of the masses, would in any case have soon extinguished. No congressional caucus was ever again held for the choice of candidates.

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[1] It was not absolutely necessary to have a nomination, because there was a general feeling in favour of re-electing Monroe.

[2] The whole number was then 261, nearly all Democrats, for the Federalist party had been for some time virtually extinct.

A new method, however, was not at once discovered. In 1828 Jackson was recommended as candidate by the legislature of Tennessee and by a number of popular gatherings in different places, while his opponents accepted, without any formal nomination, the then President, J. Q. Adams, as their candidate. In 1831, however, and again in 1832, assemblies were held by two great parties (the Anti-Masons and the National Republicans, afterwards called Whigs) consisting of delegates from most of the States; and each of these conventions nominated its candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. A third "national convention" of young men, which met later in 1832, adopted the Whig nominations, and added to them a series of ten resolutions, constituting the first political platform ever put forth by a nominating body. The friends of Jackson followed suit by holding their convention which nominated him and Van Buren. For the election of 1836, a similar convention was held by the Jacksonian Democrats, none by their opponents. But for that of 1840, national conventions of delegates from nearly all the States were held by both Democrats and Whigs, as well as by the (then young and very small) party of the Abolitionists. This precedent has been followed in every subsequent contest, so that the national nominating conventions of the great parties are now as much a part of the regular machinery of politics as the election rules contained in the Constitution itself. The establishment of the system coincides with and represents the complete social democratization of politics in Jackson's time. It suits both the professionals, for whom it finds occupation and whose power it secures, and the ordinary citizen who, not having time himself to attend to politics, likes to think that his right of selecting candidates is duly recognized in the selection of candidates by delegates whom he is entitled to vote for. But it was soon seen to be liable to fall under the control of selfish intriguers and to destroy the chances of able and independent men, and was denounced as early as 1844 by Calhoun, who then refused to allow his name to be submitted to a nominating convention. He observed that he would never have joined in breaking down the old congressional caucus had he foreseen that its successor would prove so much more pernicious.

Thus from 1789 till 1800 there were no formal nominations; from 1800 till 1824, nominations were made by congressional caucuses; from 1824 till 1840, nominations irregularly made by

State legislatures and popular meetings were gradually ripening towards the method of a special gathering of delegates from the whole country. This last plan has held its ground from 1840 till the present day, and is so exactly conformable to the political habits of the people that it is not likely soon to disappear.[1]

Its perfection, however, was not reached at once. The early conventions were to a large extent mass meetings.[2] The later and present ones are regularly-constituted representative bodies, composed exclusively of delegates, each of whom has been duly elected at a party meeting in his own State, and brings with him his credentials. It would be tedious to trace the process whereby the present system was created, so I shall be content with describing it in outline as it now stands.

The Constitution provides that each State shall choose as many presidential electors as it has persons representing it in Congress, *i.e.* two electors to correspond to the two senators from each State, and as many more as the State sends members to the House of Representatives. Thus Delaware and Oregon have each three electoral votes, because they have each only one representative besides their two senators. New York has thirty-six electoral votes: two corresponding to its two senators, thirty-four corresponding to its thirty-four representatives in the House.

Now in the nominating convention each State is allowed twice as many delegates as it has electoral votes, *e.g.* Delaware and Oregon have each six delegates, New York has seventy-two. The delegates are chosen by local conventions in their several States, viz. two for each congressional district by the party convention of that district, and four for the whole State (called delegates-at-large) by the State convention. As each convention is composed of delegates from primaries, it is the composition of the primaries which determines that of the local conventions, and the composition of the local conventions which determines that of the national. To every delegate there is added a person called his "alternate," chosen by the local convention at the same time, and empowered to replace him in case he cannot be present in the national convention. If the delegate is present to vote the alternate is silent; if from any cause the delegate is absent, the alternate steps into his shoes.

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[1] An interesting sketch of the history of congressional caucuses and presidential conventions is given by Mr. M. Ostrogorski in two articles in the *Annales de l'École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, January and April 1888.

[2] In 1856 the first Republican convention, which nominated Fremont, was rather a mass meeting than a representative body. So was the seceding Republican convention which met at Cincinnati in 1872 and nominated Greeley.

Respecting the freedom of the delegate to vote for whom he will, there have been differences both of doctrine and of practice. A local convention or State convention may instruct its delegates which aspirant[1] shall be their first choice, or even in case he cannot be carried, for whom their subsequent votes shall be cast. Such instructions are frequently given, and still more frequently implied, because a delegate is often chosen expressly as being the supporter of one or other of the aspirants whose names are most prominent. But the delegate is not absolutely bound to follow his instructions. He may vote even on the first ballot for some other aspirant than the one desired by his own local or State convention. Much more, of course, may he, though not so instructed, change his vote when it is plain that that aspirant will not succeed. His vote is always a valid one, even when given in the teeth of his instructions; but how far he will be held censurable for breaking them depends on a variety of circumstances. His motives may be corrupt; perhaps something has been given him. They may be pardonable; a party chief may have put pressure on him, or he may desire to be on the safe side, and go with the majority. They may be laudable; he really seeks to do the best for the party, or has been convinced by facts lately brought to his knowledge that the man for whom he is instructed is unworthy. Where motives are doubtful, it may be charitable, but it is not safe, to assume that they are of the higher order. Each "State delegation" has its chairman, and is expected to keep together during the convention. It usually travels together to the place of meeting; takes rooms in the same hotel; has a recognized headquarters there; sits in a particular place allotted to it in the convention hall; holds meetings of its members during the progress of the convention to decide on the course which it shall from time to time take. These meetings, if the State be a large and doubtful one, excite great interest, and the sharp-eared reporter prowls round them, eager to learn how the votes will go. Each State delegation votes by its chairman, who announces how his delegates vote; but if his report is challenged the roll of delegates is called, and they vote individually. Whether the votes of a State delegation shall be given solid for the aspirant whom the majority of the delegation favours, or by the delegates individually according to their preferences, is a point which has excited bitter controversy. The present practice of the Republican party (so settled in 1876 and again in 1880) allows the delegates to vote individually, even when they have been instructed by a State convention to cast a solid vote. The Democratic party, on the other hand, sustains any such instruction given to the delegation, and records the vote of all the State delegates for the aspirant whom the majority among them approve.[1] This is the so-called Unit Rule. If, however, the State convention has not imposed the unit rule, the delegates vote individually.

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[1] I use throughout the term "aspirant" to denote a competitor for the nomination, reserving the term "candidate" for the person nominated as the party's choice for the presidency.

For the sake of keeping up party life in the Territories and in the Federal District of Columbia, delegates from them are admitted to the national convention, although the Territories and District have no votes in a presidential election. Delegations of States which are known to be in the hands of the opposite party, and whose preference of one aspirant to another will not really tell upon the result of the presidential election, are admitted to vote equally with the delegations of the States sure to go for the party which holds the convention. This arrangement is justified on the ground that it sustains the interest and energy of the party in States where it is in a minority. But it permits the choice to be determined by districts whose own action will not tell in any way on the election itself, and the delegates from these districts are apt to belong to a lower class of politicians than those from the States where the party holds a majority, and to be swayed by more sordid motives.[2]

So much for the composition of the national convention: we may now go on to describe its proceedings.

It is held in the summer immediately preceding a presidential election, usually in June or July, the election falling in November. A large city is always chosen, in order to obtain adequate hotel accommodation, and easy railroad access. Formerly, conventions were commonly held in Baltimore or Philadelphia, but since the centre of population has shifted to the Mississippi valley, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and especially Chicago, have become the favourite spots.

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[1] An attempt was made at the Democratic convention in Chicago in July 1884 to overset this rule, but the majority re-affirmed it.

[2] Although the large majority of the delegates in the Conventions of the two great parties belong to the class of professional politicians, there is always a respectable minority of men who do not belong to that class, but have obtained the post owing to their interest in seeing a strong and honest candidate chosen. The great importance of the business draws men of talent and experience from most parts of the country.

Business begins by the "calling of the convention to order" by the chairman of the National Party committee. Then a temporary chairman is nominated, and, if opposed, voted on; the vote sometimes giving an indication of the respective strength of the factions present. Then the secretaries and the clerks are appointed, and the rules which are to govern the business are adopted. After this, the committees, particularly those on credentials and resolutions, are nominated, and the convention adjourns till their report can be presented.

The next sitting usually opens, after the customary prayer, with the appointment of the permanent chairman, who inaugurates the proceedings with a speech. Then the report of the committee on resolutions (if completed) is presented. It contains what is called the platform, a long series of resolutions embodying the principles and programme of the party, which has usually been so drawn as to conciliate every section, and avoid or treat with prudent ambiguity those questions on which opinion within the party is divided. Any delegate who objects to a resolution can move to strike it out or amend it; but it is generally sustained in the shape it has received from the practised hands of the committee.

Next follows the nomination of aspirants for the post of party candidate. The roll of States is called, and when a State is reached to which an aspirant intended to be nominated belongs, a prominent delegate from that State mounts the platform, and proposes him in a speech extolling his merits, and sometimes indirectly disparaging the other aspirants. Another delegate seconds the nomination, sometimes a third follows; and then the roll-call goes on till all the States have been despatched, and all the aspirants nominated.[1] The average number of nominations is seven or eight; it rarely exceeds twelve.[2]

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[1] Nominations may however be made at any subsequent time.

[2] However, in the Republican Convention of 1888, fourteen aspirants were nominated at the outset, six of whom were voted for on the last ballot. Votes were given at one or other of the ballotings for nineteen aspirants in all.

Thus the final stage is reached, for which all else has been but preparation—that of balloting between the aspirants. The clerks call the roll of States from Alabama to Wisconsin, and as each is called the chairman of its delegation announces the votes, *e.g.* six for A, five for B, three for C, unless, of course, under the unit rule, the whole vote is cast for that one aspirant whom the majority of the delegation supports. When all have voted, the totals are made up and announced. If one competitor has an absolute majority of the whole number voting, according to the Republican rule, a majority of two-thirds of the number voting, according to the Democratic rule, he has been duly chosen, and nothing remains but formally to make his nomination unanimous. If, however, as has usually happened of late years, no one obtains the requisite majority, the roll is called again, in order that individual delegates and delegations (if the unit rule prevails) may have the opportunity of changing their votes; and the process is repeated until some one of the aspirants put forward has received the required number of votes. Sometimes many roll-calls take place. In 1852 the Democrats nominated Franklin Pierce on the forty-ninth ballot, and the Whigs General Scott on the fifty-third. In 1880, thirty-six ballots were taken before General Garfield was nominated. But, in 1835, Martin Van Buren; in 1844, Henry Clay; in 1868 and 1872, Ulysses S. Grant, were unanimously nominated, the two former by acclamation, the latter on the first ballot. In 1884 Mr. Blaine was nominated by the Republicans on the fourth ballot, Mr. Cleveland by the Democrats on the second.[1] Thus it sometimes happens that the voting is over in an hour or two, while at other times it may last for days.

When a candidate for the presidency has been thus found, the convention proceeds to similarly determine its candidate for the vice-presidency. The inferiority of the office, and the exhaustion which has by this time overcome the delegates, make the second struggle a less exciting and protracted one. Frequently one of the defeated aspirants is consoled by this minor nomination, especially if he has retired at the nick of time in favour of the rival who has been chosen. The work of the convention is then complete, and votes of thanks to the chairman and other officials conclude the proceedings. The two nominees are now the party candidates, entitled to the support of the party organizations and of loyal party men over the length and breadth of the Union.

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[1] In 1888 Mr. Cleveland was nominated by the Democrats by acclamation, Mr. Harrison by the Republicans on the eighth ballot.

Entitled to that support, but not necessarily sure to receive it. Even in America, party discipline cannot compel an individual voter to cast his ballot for the party nominee. All that the convention can do is to recommend the candidate to the party; all that opinion can do is to brand as a Kicker or Bolter whoever breaks away; all that the local party organization can do is to strike the bolter off its lists. But how stands it, the reader will ask, with the delegates who have been present in the convention, have had their chance of carrying their man, and have been beaten? are they not held absolutely bound to support the candidate chosen?

This is a question which has excited much controversy. The impulse and effort of the successful majority has always been to impose such an obligation on the defeated minority, and the chief motive which has prevented it from being always formally enforced by a rule or resolution of the convention has been the fear that it might precipitate hostilities, might induce men of independent character, or strongly opposed to some particular aspirant, to refuse to attend as delegates, or to secede early in the proceedings when they saw that a person whom they disapproved was likely to win.

At the Republican national convention at Chicago in June 1880 an attempt was successfully made to impose the obligation by the following resolution, commonly called the "Iron clad Pledge":—

"That every member of this convention is bound in honour to support its nominee, whoever that nominee may be, and that no man should hold his seat here who is not ready so to agree."

This was carried by 716 votes to 3. But at the Republican national convention at Chicago in June 1884, when a similar resolution was presented, the opposition developed was strong enough to compel its withdrawal; and in point of fact, several conspicuous delegates at that convention strenuously opposed its nominee at the subsequent presidential election, themselves voting, and inducing others to vote, for the candidate of the Democratic party.

CHAPTER LXX

THE NOMINATING CONVENTION AT WORK

WE have examined the composition of a national convention and the normal order of business in it. The more difficult task remains of describing the actual character and features of such an assembly, the motives which sway it, the temper it displays, the passions it elicits, the wiles by which its members are lured or driven to their goal.

A national convention has two objects, the formal declaration of the principles, views, and practical proposals of the party, and the choice of its candidates for the executive headship of the nation.

Of these objects the former has in critical times, such as the two elections preceding the Civil War, been of great importance. In the Democratic Convention at Charleston in 1860, a debate on resolutions led to a secession, and to the break-up of the Democratic party.[1] But of late years the adoption of platforms, drafted in a somewhat vague and pompous style by the committee, has been almost a matter of form. Some observations on these enunciations of doctrine will be found in another chapter.[2]

The second object is of absorbing interest and importance, because the presidency is the great prize of politics, the goal of every statesman's ambition. The President can by his veto stop legislation adverse to the wishes of the party he represents. The President is the universal dispenser of patronage.[3]

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[1] The national conventions of those days were much smaller than now, nor were the assisting spectators so numerous.

[2] The nearest English parallel to an American "platform" is to be found in the addresses to their respective constituencies issued at a general election by the Prime Minister, if a member of the House of Commons, and the leader of the Opposition in that House. Such addresses, however, do not formally bind the whole party, as an American platform does.

[3] Subject at present, as respects some offices, to the provisions of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1883.

One may therefore say that the task of a convention is to choose the party candidate. And it is a task difficult enough to tax all the resources of the host of delegates and their leaders. Who is the man fittest to be adopted as candidate? Not even a novice in politics will suppose that it is the best man, *i.e.* the wisest, strongest, and most upright. Plainly, it is the man most likely to win, the man who, to use the technical term, is most "available." What a party wants is not a good President but a good candidate. The party managers have therefore to look out for the person likely to gain most support, and at the same time excite least opposition. Their search is rendered more troublesome by the fact that many of them, being themselves either aspirants or the close allies of aspirants, are not disinterested, and are distrusted by their fellow-searchers.

Many things have to be considered. The ability of a statesman, the length of time he has been before the people, his oratorical gifts, his "magnetism" (personal attractiveness), his family connections, his face and figure, the purity of his private life, his "record" (the chronicle of his conduct) as regards integrity—all these are matters needing to be weighed. To have served with distinction in the Federal ranks during the War of Secession, endears a man to the still numerous veterans of the Northern armies, and does not damage him in the South. Account must be taken of the personal jealousies and hatreds which a man has excited. To have incurred the enmity of a leading statesman, of a powerful boss or ring, or of an influential newspaper, is serious. Several such feuds may be fatal.

Finally, much depends on the State whence a possible candidate comes. Local feeling leads a State to support one of its own citizens; it increases the vote of his own party in that State, and reduces the vote of the opposite party. Where the State is decidedly of one political colour, *e.g.* so steadily Republican as Vermont, so steadily Democratic as Maryland, this consideration is weak, for the choice of a Democratic candidate from the former, or of a Republican candidate from the latter, would not make the difference of the State's vote. It is therefore from a doubtful State that a candidate may with most advantage be selected; and the larger the doubtful State the better California, with her five electoral votes, is just worth "placating"; Indiana, with her fifteen votes, more so; New York, with her thirty-six votes, most so of all. Hence an aspirant who belongs to a great and doubtful State is *prima facie* the most eligible candidate. The force of this consideration is shown by the fact that during the last thirty years nearly all leading aspirants have come from great States, though some of the most eminent statesmen have been citizens of small ones such as Vermont and Delaware.

Aspirants hoping to obtain the party nomination from a national convention may be divided into three classes, the two last of which, as will appear presently, are not mutually exclusive, viz.—

Favourites. Dark Horses. Favourite Sons.

A Favourite is always a politician well known over the Union, and drawing support from all or most of its sections. He is a man who has distinguished himself in Congress, or in the war, or in the politics of some State so large that its politics are matter of knowledge and interest to the whole nation. He is usually a person of conspicuous gifts, whether as a speaker, or a party manager, or an administrator. The drawback to him is that in making friends he has also made enemies.

A Dark Horse is a person not very widely known in the country at large, but known rather for good than for evil. He has probably sat in Congress, been useful on committees, and gained some credit among those who dealt with him in Washington. Or he has approved himself a safe and assiduous party man in the political campaigns of his own and neighbouring States, yet without reaching national prominence. Sometimes he is a really able man, but without the special talents that win popularity. Still, speaking generally, the note of the Dark Horse is respectability, verging on colourlessness; and he is therefore a good sort of person to fall back upon when able but dangerous Favourites have proved impossible. That native mediocrity rather than adverse fortune has prevented him from winning fame is proved by the fact that the Dark Horses who have reached the White House, if they have seldom turned out bad presidents, have even more seldom turned out distinguished ones.

A Favourite Son is a politician respected or admired in his own State, but little regarded beyond it. He may not be, like the Dark Horse, little known to the nation at large, but he has not fixed its eye or filled its ear. He is usually a man who has sat in the State legislature; filled with credit the post of State governor; perhaps gone as senator or representative to Washington, and there approved himself an active promoter of local interests. Probably he possesses the qualities which gain local popularity — geniality, activity, sympathy with the dominant sentiment and habits of his State; or while endowed with gifts excellent in their way, he has lacked the audacity and tenacity which push a man to the front through a jostling crowd. More rarely he is a demagogue who has raised himself by flattering the masses of his State on some local questions, or a skilful handler of party organizations who has made local bosses and spoilsmen believe that their interests are safe in his hands. Anyhow, his personality is such as to be more effective with neighbours than with the nation, as a lamp whose glow fills the side chapel of a cathedral sinks to a spark of light when carried into the nave.

A Favourite Son may be also a Dark Horse; that is to say, he may be well known in his own State, but so little known out of it as to be an unlikely candidate. But he need not be. The types are different, for as there are Favourite Sons whom the nation knows but does not care for, so there are Dark Horses whose reputation, such as it is, has not been made in State affairs, and who rely very little on State favour.

There are seldom more than two, never more than three Favourites in the running at the same convention. Favourite Sons are more numerous—it is not uncommon to have four or five, or even six, though perhaps not all these are actually started in the race. The number of Dark Horses is practically unlimited, because many talked of beforehand are not actually started, while others not considered before the convention begins are discovered as it goes on. This happened in the leading and most instructive case of James A. Garfield, who was not voted for at all on the first ballot in the Republican Convention of 1880, and had, on no ballot up to the thirty-fourth, received more than two votes. On the thirty-sixth[1] he was nominated by 399. So, in 1868, Horatio Seymour, who had been so little thought of as a candidate that he was chairman of the Democratic Convention, was first voted for on the twenty-second ballot. He refused to be nominated, but was induced to leave the chair and nominated on that very ballot.

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[1] In 1860 the Democratic Convention at Charleston nominated Mr. Douglas on the fifty-seventh ballot.

To carry the analysis farther, it may be observed that four sets of motives are at work upon those who direct or vote in a convention, acting with different degrees of force on different persons. There is the wish to carry a particular aspirant. There is the wish to defeat a particular aspirant, a wish sometimes stronger than any predilection. There is the desire to get something for one's self out of the struggle—*e.g.* by trading one's vote or influence for the prospect of a Federal office. There is the wish to find the man who, be he good or bad, friend or foe, will give the party its best chance of victory. These motives cross one another, get mixed, vary in relative strength from hour to hour as the convention goes on and new possibilities are disclosed. To forecast their joint effect on the minds of particular persons and sections of a party needs wide knowledge and eminent acuteness, to play upon them is a matter of the finest skill.

The proceedings of a nominating convention can be best understood by regarding the three periods into which they fall: the transactions which precede the opening of its sittings; the preliminary business of passing rules and resolutions and delivering the nominating speeches; and, finally, the balloting.

A President has scarcely been elected before the newspapers begin to discuss his probable successor. Little, however, is done towards the ascertainment of candidates till about a year before the next election, when the factions of the chief aspirants prepare to fall into line, newspapers take up their parable in favour of one or other, and bosses begin the work of "subsoiling," *i.e.* manipulating primaries and local conventions so as to secure the choice of such delegates to the next national convention as they desire. In most of the conventions which appoint delegates, the claims of the several aspirants are canvassed, and the delegates chosen are usually chosen in the interest of one particular aspirant. The newspapers, with their quick sense of what is beginning to stir men's thoughts, redouble their advocacy, and the "boom" of one or two of the probable favourites is thus fairly started. Before the delegates leave their homes for the national convention, most of them have fixed on their candidate, many having indeed received positive instructions as to how their vote shall be cast. All appears to be spontaneous, but in reality both the choice of particular men as delegates, and the instructions given, are usually the result of untiring underground work among local politicians, directed, or even personally conducted, by two or three skilful agents and emissaries of a leading aspirant, or of the knot which seeks to run him.

Four or five days before the day fixed for the opening of the convention the delegations begin to flock into the city where it is to be held. Some come attended by a host of friends and camp-followers, and are received at the depôt (railway terminus) by the politicians of the city, with a band of music and an admiring crowd. Thus Tammany Hall, the famous Democratic club of New York City, came six hundred strong to Chicago in July 1884, filling two special trains.[1] A great crowd met it at the station, and it marched, following its Boss, from the cars to its headquarters at the Palmer House in procession, each member wearing his badge, just as the retainers of Earl Warwick the King-maker used to follow him through the streets of London with the Bear and Ragged Staff upon their sleeves. Less than twenty of the six hundred were delegates; the rest ordinary members of the organization, who had accompanied to give it moral and vocal support.[2]

Before the great day dawns many thousands of politicians, newspaper men, and sight-seers have filled to overflowing every hotel in the city, and crowded the main thoroughfares so that the horse-cars can scarcely penetrate the throng. It is like a mediæval pilgrimage, or the mustering of a great army. When the chief delegations have arrived the work begins in earnest. Not only each large delegation, but the faction of each leading aspirant to the candidacy, has its headquarters, where the managers hold perpetual session, reckoning up their numbers, starting rumours meant to exaggerate their resources, and dishearten their opponents, organizing raids upon the less experienced delegates as they arrive. Some fill the entrance halls and bars of the hotels, talk to the busy reporters, extemporize meetings with tumultuous cheering for their favourite. The common "worker" is good enough to raise the boom by these devices. Meanwhile, the more skilful leaders begin (as it is expressed) to "plough around" among the delegations of the newer Western and Southern States, usually (at least among the

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[1] The Boss of Tammany was an object of special curiosity to the crowd, being the most illustrious professional in the whole United States.

[2] The two other Democratic organizations of New York City, the County Democracy and Irving Hall, came each in force—the one a regiment of five hundred, the other of two hundred.

Republicans) more malleable, because they come from regions where the strength of the factions supporting the various aspirants is less accurately known, and are themselves more easily "captured" by bold assertions or seductive promises. Sometimes an expert intriguer will "break into" one of these wavering delegations, and make havoc like a fox in a hen-roost. "Missionaries" are sent out to bring over individuals; embassies are accredited from one delegation to another to endeavour to arrange combinations by coaxing the weaker party to drop its own aspirant, and add its votes to those of the stronger party. All is conducted with perfect order and good-humour, for the least approach to violence would recoil upon its authors; and the only breach of courtesy is where a delegation refuses to receive the ambassadors of an organization whose evil fame has made it odious.[1]

It is against etiquette for the aspirants themselves to appear upon the scene,[2] whether from some lingering respect for the notion that a man must not ask the people to choose him, but accept the proffered honour, or on the principle that the attorney who conducts his own case has a fool for a client. But from Washington, if he is an official or a senator, or perhaps from his own home in some distant State, each aspirant keeps up hourly communication with his managers in the convention city, having probably a private wire laid on for the purpose. Not only may officials, including the President himself, become aspirants, but Federal office-holders may be, and very largely are, delegates, especially among the Southern Republicans when that party is in power. They have the strongest personal interest in the issue; and the heads of departments can, by promises of places, exert a potent influence. One hears in America, just as one used to hear in France under Louis Napoleon or Marshal MacMahon, of the "candidate of the Administration."[3]

As the hour when the convention is to open approaches, each faction strains its energy to the utmost. The larger delegations hold meetings to determine their course in the event of the man they chiefly favour proving "unavailable." Conferences take place between different delegations. Lists are published in the newspapers of the strength of each aspirant. Sea and land are compassed to gain one influential delegate, who "owns" other delegates. If he resists other persuasions, he is "switched on" to the private wire of some magnate at Washington, who "talks to him," and suggests inducements more effective than those he has hitherto withstood. The air is thick with tales of plots and treasons, so that no politician trusts his neighbour, for rumour spares none.

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[1] This happened once or twice in July 1884; Tammany Hall being regarded with some suspicion by the better sort of Democrats.

[2] Oddly enough, the only English parallel to this delicate reserve is to be found in the custom which forbids a candidate for the representation in Parliament of the University of Oxford to approach the University before or during the election.

[3] In 1884, President Arthur and his ministers at Washington sat up during the long night session of the Republican Convention receiving an incessant stream of telegraphic reports of the proceedings at Chicago.

At length the period of expectation and preparation is over, and the summer sun rises upon the fateful day to which every politician in the party has looked forward for three years. Long before the time (usually 11 A.M.) fixed for the beginning of business, every part of the hall, erected specially for the gathering—a hall often large enough to hold from ten to fifteen thousand persons—is crowded.[1] The delegates—who in 1884 were 820 in number—are a mere drop in the ocean of faces. Eminent politicians from every State of the Union, senators and representatives from Washington not a few, journalists and reporters, ladies, sight-seers from distant cities, as well as a swarm of partisans from the city itself, press in; some semblance of order being kept by the sergeant-at-arms and his marshals. Some wear devices, sometimes the badge of their State, or of their organization; sometimes the colours or emblem of their favourite aspirant.[2] Each State delegation has its allotted place marked by the flag of the State floating from a pole; but leaders may be seen passing from one group to another, while the spectators listen to the band playing popular airs, and cheer any well-known figure that enters.

When the assembly is "called to order," a prayer is offered —each day's sitting begins with a prayer by some clergyman of local eminence,[3] the susceptibilities of various denominations being duly respected in the selection—and business proceeds according to the order described in last chapter. First come the preliminaries, appointment of committees and chairman, then the platform, and probably on the second day, but perhaps later, the nominations and balloting, the latter sometimes extending over several days. There is usually both a forenoon and an afternoon session.

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[1] Admission is of course by ticket, and the prices given for tickets to those who, having obtained them, sell them, run high, up to $30, or even $50.

[2] In the Democratic Convention of 1884 the admirers of a certain senatorial aspirant proclaimed themselves by red bandana handkerchiefs, that article of dress being a favourite with the senator in question.

[3] It was remarked at the Democratic Convention of 1884 that the delegates from the South all rose and stood during the prayer, while those from the Northern States did not.

A European is astonished to see eight hundred men prepare to transact the two most difficult pieces of business an assembly can undertake, the solemn consideration of their principles, and the selection of the person they wish to place at the head of the nation, in the sight and hearing of twelve thousand other men and women. Observation of what follows does not lessen the astonishment. The convention presents in sharp contrast and frequent alternation, the two most striking features of Americans in public—their orderliness and their excitability. Everything is done according to strict rule, with a scrupulous observance of small formalities which European meetings would ignore or despise. Points of order almost too fine for a parliament are taken, argued, decided on by the chair, to whom every one bows. Yet the passions that sway the multitude are constantly bursting forth in storms of cheering or hissing at an allusion to a favourite aspirant or an obnoxious name, and five or six speakers often take the floor together, shouting and gesticulating at each other till the chairman obtains a hearing for one of them. Of course it depends on the chairman whether or no the convention sinks into a mob. A chairman with a weak voice, or a want of prompt decision, or a suspicion of partisanship, may bring the assembly to the verge of disaster, and it has more than once happened that when the confusion that prevailed would have led to an irregular vote which might have been subsequently disputed, the action of the manager acting for the winning horse has, by waiving some point of order or consenting to an adjournment, saved the party from disruption. Even in the noisiest scenes the singular good sense and underlying love of fair-play—fair-play according to the rules of the game, which do not exclude some dodges repugnant to an honourable man—will often reassert itself, and pull back the vehicle from the edge of the precipice.

The chief interest of the earlier proceedings lies in the indications which speeches and votings give of the relative strength of the factions. Sometimes a division on the choice of a chairman, or on the adoption of a rule, reveals the tendencies of the majority, or of influential leaders, in a way which sends the chances of an aspirant swiftly up or down the barometer of opinion. So when the nominating speeches come, it is not so much their eloquence that helps a nominee as the warmth with which the audience receives them, the volume of cheering and the length of time, sometimes fifteen minutes, during which the transport lasts. As might be guessed from the size of the audience which he addresses, an orator is expected to "soar into the blue empyrean" at once. The rhetoric is usually pompous and impassioned. To read a speech, even a short speech, from copious notes, is neither irregular nor rare.

While forenoon and evening, perhaps even late evening, are occupied with the sittings of the convention, canvassing and intrigue go on more briskly than ever during the rest of the day and night. Conferences are held between delegations anxious to arrange for a union of forces on one candidate.[1] Divided delegations hold meetings of their own members, meetings often long and stormy, behind closed doors, outside which a curious crowd listens to the angry voices within, and snatches at the reports which the dispersing members give of the result. Sometimes the whole issue of the convention hinges on the action of the delegates of a great State, which, like New York, under the unit rule, can throw seventy-two votes into the trembling scale.[2] It may even happen, although this is against a well-settled custom, that a brazen aspirant himself goes the round of several delegations and tries to harangue them into supporting him.[3]

As it rarely happens that any aspirant is able to command at starting a majority of the whole convention, the object of each is to arrange a combination whereby he may gather from the supporters of other aspirants votes sufficient to make up the requisite majority, be it two-thirds, according to the Democratic rule, or a little more than a half, according to the Republican. Let us take the total number of votes at 820—the figure in 1888. There are usually two aspirants commanding each from 230 to 330; one or two others with from 50 to 100, and the rest with much smaller figures, 10 to 30 each. A combination can succeed in one of two ways: (*a*) One of the stronger aspirants may pick up votes, sometimes quickly, sometimes by slow degrees, from the weaker candidates, sufficient to overpower the rival Favourite; (*b*) Each of the strongest aspirants may hold his forces so well together that after repeated ballotings it becomes clear that neither can win against the resistance of the other. Neither faction will, however, give way, because there is usually bitterness between them, because each would feel humiliated, and because each aspirant has so many friends that his patronage will no more than suffice for the clients to whom he is pledged already. Hence one or other of the baffled Favourites suddenly transfers the votes he commands to some one of the weaker men, who then so rapidly "develops strength" that the rest of the minor factions go over to him, and he obtains the requisite majority.[1] Experience has so well prepared the tacticians for one or other of these issues that the game is always played with a view to them. The first effort of the managers of a Favourite is to capture the minor groups of delegates who support one or other of the Favourite Sons and Dark Horses. Not till this proves hopeless do they decide to sell themselves as dear as they can by taking up and carrying to victory a Dark Horse or perhaps even a Favourite Son, thereby retaining the pleasure of defeating the rival Favourite, while at the same time establishing a claim for themselves and their faction on the aspirant whom they carry.[2]

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[1] In 1884 many efforts were made to arrange combinations against Mr. Blaine, but all failed. The Arthur men are reported to have sent an embassy to the Edmunds men begging them to lend some votes for the first ballot, in order that the total Arthur vote might at first overtop that of Mr. Blaine. The Edmunds men refused, being mostly persons entirely out of sympathy with the Arthur men, though possibly they would have preferred Mr. Arthur to Mr. Blaine.

[2] In the Democratic Convention of 1884 it was well known that the choice of Mr. Cleveland, the leading favourite, would depend on the action of the delegation of New York State, not only, however, because it cast the largest vote, but because it was his own State, and because it was already foreseen that the presidential election would turn on the electoral vote of New York. Thus the struggle in the convention came to be really a duel between Mr. Cleveland and the Boss of Tammany, with whom Mr. Cleveland had at an earlier period in his career 'locked horns."

[3] This is reported to have been done by a well-known politician in Chicago in July 1884.

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[1] Suppose A and B, Favourites, to have each 300 votes. After some ballotings, A's friends, perceiving they cannot draw enough of the votes commanded by C, D, and F (who have each 60), and of G and H (who have each 20) to win, give their 300 votes to F. This gives him so considerable a lead that C, D, and G go over to him on the next ballot; he has then 440, and either wins at once (Republican rule) or will win next ballot (Democratic rule).

[2] It will be understood that while the Favourites and Favourite Sons are before the convention from the first, some of the Dark Horses may not appear as aspirants till well on in the balloting. They may be persons who have never been thought

It may be asked why a Dark Horse often prevails against the Favourites, seeing that either of the latter has a much larger number of delegates in his favour. Ought not the wish of a very large group to have so much weight with the minor groups as to induce them to come over and carry the man whom a powerful section of the party obviously desires? The reason why this does not happen is that a Favourite is often as much hated by one strong section as he is liked by another, and if the hostile section is not strong enough to keep him out by its unaided vote, it is sure to be able to do so by transferring itself to some other aspirant. Moreover, a Favourite has often less chance with the minor groups than a Dark Horse may have. He has not the charm of novelty. His "ins and outs" are known; the delegations weighed his merits before they left their own State, and if they, or the State convention that instructed them, decided against him then, they are slow to adopt him now. They have formed a habit of "antagonizing" him, whereas they have no hostility to some new and hitherto inconspicuous aspirant.

Let us now suppose resolutions and nominating speeches despatched, and the curtain raised for the third act of the convention. The chairman raps loudly with his gavel,[1] announcing the call of States for the vote. A hush falls on the multitude, a long deep breath is drawn, tally books are opened and pencils grasped, while the clerk reads slowly the names of State after State. As each is called, the chairman of its delegation rises and announces the votes it gives, bursts of cheering from each faction in the audience welcoming the votes given to the object of its wishes. Inasmuch as the disposition of most of the delegates has become known beforehand, not only to the managers, but to the public through the press, the loudest welcome is given to a delegate or delegation whose vote turns out better than had been predicted.

In the first scene of this third and decisive act the Favourites have, of course, the leading parts. Their object is to produce an impression of overwhelming strength, so the whole of this

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of before as possible candidates. There is therefore always a great element of exciting uncertainty.

[1] The gavel is a sort of auctioneer's hammer used by a chairman to call the attention of the meeting to what he is saying or to restore order. That used at a national convention is often made of thirty-eight pieces of wood from the various States.

strength is displayed, unless, as occasionally happens, an astute manager holds back a few votes. This is also the bright hour of the Favourite Sons. Each receives the vote of his State, but each usually finds that he has little to expect from external help, and his friends begin to consider into what other camp they had better march over. The Dark Horses are in the background, nor is it yet possible to say which (if any) of them will come to the front.

The first ballot seldom decides much, yet it gives a new aspect to the battlefield, for the dispositions of some groups of voters who had remained doubtful is now revealed, and the managers of each aspirant are better able to tell, from the way in which certain delegations are divided, in what quarters they are most likely to gain or lose votes on the subsequent ballots. They whisper hastily together, and try, in the few moments they have before the second ballot is upon them, to prepare some new line of defence or attack.

The second ballot, taken in the same way, sometimes reveals even more than the first. The smaller and more timid delegations, smitten with the sense of their weakness, despairing of their own aspirant, and anxious to be on the winning side, begin to give way; or if this does not happen on the second ballot, it may do so on the third. Rifts open in their ranks, individuals or groups of delegates go over to one of the stronger candidates, some having all along meant to do so, and thrown their first vote merely to obey instructions received or fulfil the letter of a promise given. The gain of even twenty or thirty votes for one of the leading candidates over his strength on the preceding ballot so much inspirits his friends, and is so likely to bring fresh recruits to his standard, that a wily manager will often, on the first ballot, throw away some of his votes on a harmless antagonist that he may by rallying them increase the total of his candidate on the second, and so convey the impression of growing strength.

The breathing space between each ballot and that which follows is used by the managers for hurried consultations. Aides-de-camp are sent to confirm a wavering delegation, or to urge one which has been supporting a now hopeless aspirant to seize this moment for dropping him and coming over to the winning standard. Or the aspirant himself, who, hundreds of miles away, sits listening to the click of the busy wires, is told how matters stand, and asked to advise forthwith what course his friends shall take. Forthwith it must be, for the next ballot is come, and may give the battlefield a new aspect, promising victory or presaging irretrievable defeat.

Any one who has taken part in an election, be it the election of a pope by cardinals, of a town-clerk by the city council, of a fellow by the dons of a college, of a schoolmaster by the board of trustees, of a pastor by a congregation, knows how much depends on generalship. In every body of electors there are men who have no minds of their own; others who cannot make up their minds till the decisive moment, and are determined by the last word or incident; others whose wavering inclination yields to the pressure or follows the example of a stronger colleague. There are therefore chances of running in by surprise an aspirant whom few may have desired, but still fewer have positively disliked, chances specially valuable when controversy has spent itself between two equally-matched competitors, so that the majority are ready to jump at a new suggestion. The wary tactician awaits his opportunity; he improves the brightening prospects of his aspirant to carry him with a run before the opposition is ready with a counter move; or if he sees a strong antagonist, he invents pretexts for delay till he has arranged a combination by which that antagonist may be foiled. Sometimes he will put forward an aspirant destined to be abandoned, and reserve till several votings have been taken the man with whom he means to win. All these arts are familiar to the convention manager, whose power is seen not merely in the dealing with so large a number of individuals and groups whose dispositions he must grasp and remember, but in the cool promptitude with which he decides on his course amid the noise and passion and distractions of twelve thousand shouting spectators. Scarcely greater are the faculties of combination and coolness of head needed by a general in the midst of a battle, who has to bear in mind the position of every one of his own corps and to divine the positions of those of the enemy's corps which remain concealed, who must vary his plan from hour to hour according to the success or failure of each of his movements and the new facts that are successively disclosed, and who does all this under the roar and through the smoke of cannon.

One balloting follows another till what is called "the break" comes. It comes when the weaker factions, perceiving that the men of their first preference cannot succeed, transfer their votes to that one among the aspirants whom they like best, or whose strength they see growing. When the faction of one aspirant has set the example, others are quick to follow, and thus it may happen that after thirty or forty ballots have been taken with few changes of strength as between the two leading competitors, a single ballot, once the break has begun, and the column of one or both of these competitors has been "staggered," decides the battle.

If one Favourite is much stronger from the first than any other, the break may come soon and come gently, *i.e.* each ballot shows a gain for him on the preceding ballot, and he marches so steadily to victory that resistance is felt to be useless. But if two well-matched rivals have maintained the struggle through twenty or thirty ballots, so that the long strain has wrought up all minds to unwonted excitement, the break, when it comes, comes with fierce intensity, like that which used to mark the charge of the Old Guard. The defeat becomes a rout. Battalion after battalion goes over to the victors, while the vanquished, ashamed of their candidate, try to conceal themselves by throwing away their colours and joining in the cheers that acclaim the conqueror. In the picturesquely technical language of politicians, it is a Stampede.

To stampede a convention is the steadily contemplated aim of every manager who knows he cannot win on the first ballot.[1] He enjoys it as the most dramatic form of victory, he values it because it evokes an enthusiasm whose echo reverberates all over the Union, and dilates the party heart with something like that sense of supernatural guidance which Rome used to have when the cardinals chose a pope by the sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it comes of itself, when various delegations, smitten at the same moment by the sense that one of the aspirants[2] is destined to conquer, go over to him all at once. Sometimes it is due to the action of the aspirant himself. In

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[1] To check stampeding the Republican Convention of 1876 adopted a rule providing that the roll-call of States should in no case be dispensed with. This makes surprise and tumult less dangerous. (See Stanwood's useful *History of Presidential Elections.*) With the same view the Republican Convention of 1888 ruled that no vote given on any balloting should be changed before the end of that balloting.

[2] Probably a Dark Horse, for the Favourite Sons, having had their turn in the earlier ballotings, have been discounted; and are apt to excite more jealousy among the delegates of other States.

1880 Mr. Blaine, who was one of the two leading Favourites, perceiving that he could not be carried against the resistance of the Grant men, suddenly telegraphed to his friends to transfer their votes to General Garfield, till then a scarcely considered candidate. In 1884 General Logan, also by telegraph, turned over his votes to Mr. Blaine between the third and fourth ballot, thereby assuring the already probable triumph of that Favourite.

When a stampede is imminent, only one means exists of averting it, that of adjourning the convention so as to stop the panic and gain time for a combination against the winning aspirant. A resolute manager always tries this device, but he seldom succeeds, for the winning side resists the motion for adjournment, and the vote which it casts on that issue is practically a vote for its aspirant, against so much of the field as has any fight left in it. This is the most critical and exciting moment of the whole battle. A dozen speakers rise at once, some to support, some to resist the adjournment, some to protest against debate upon it, some to take points of order, few of which can be heard over the din of the howling multitude. Meanwhile, the managers who have kept their heads rush swiftly about through friendly delegations, trying at this supreme moment to rig up a combination which may resist the advancing tempest. Tremendous efforts are made to get the second Favourite's men to abandon their chief and "swing into line" for some Dark Horse or Favourite Son, with whose votes they may make head till other factions rally to them.

> "In vain, in vain, the all-consuming hour
> Relentless falls."

The battle is already lost, the ranks are broken and cannot be rallied, nothing remains for brave men but to cast their last votes against the winner and fall gloriously around their still waving banner. The motion to adjourn is defeated, and the next ballot ends the strife with a hurricane of cheering for the chosen leader. Then a sudden calm falls on the troubled sea. What is done is done, and whether done for good or for ill, the best face must be put upon it. Accordingly the proposer of one of the defeated aspirants moves that the nomination be made unanimous, and the more conspicuous friends of other aspirants hasten to show their good-humour and their loyalty to the party as a whole by seconding this proposition. Then, perhaps, a gigantic portrait of the candidate, provided by anticipation, is hoisted up, a signal for fresh enthusiasm, or a stuffed eagle is carried in procession round the hall.[1]

Nothing further remains but to nominate a candidate for the vice-presidency, a matter of small moment now that the great issue has been settled. This nomination is frequently used to console one of the defeated aspirants for the presidential nomination, or is handed over to his friends to be given to some politician of their choice. If there be a contest, it is seldom prolonged beyond two or three ballots. The convention is at an end, and in another day the whole host of exhausted delegates and camp-followers, hoarse with shouting, is streaming home along the railways.

The fever heat of the convention is almost matched by that of the great cities, and indeed of every spot over the Union to which there runs an electric wire. Every incident, speech, vote, is instantly telegraphed to all the cities. Crowds gather round the newspaper offices, where frequent editions are supplemented by boards displaying the latest bulletins. In Washington, Congress can hardly be kept together, because every politician is personally interested in every move of the game. When at last the result is announced, the partisans of the chosen candidate go wild with delight; salvos of artillery are fired off, processions with bands parade the streets, ratification meetings are announced for the same evening, "campaign clubs" bearing the candidate's name are organized on the spot. The excitement is of course greatest in the victor's own State, or in the city where he happens to be resident. A crowd rushes to his house, squeezes his hand to a quivering pulp, congratulates him on being virtually President, while the keen-eyed reporter telegraphs far and wide how he smiled and spoke when the news was brought. Defeated aspirants telegraph to their luckier rival their congratulations on his success, promising him support in the campaign. Interviewers fly to prominent politicians, and cross-examine them as to what they think of the nomination. But in two days all is still again, and a lull of exhaustion follows till the real business of the contest begins some while later with the issue of the letter of acceptance, in which the candidate declares his views and outlines his policy.

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[1] So at Chicago in 1884.

CHAPTER LXXI

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

A PRESIDENTIAL election in America is something to which Europe can show nothing similar. Though the issues which fall to be decided by the election of a Chamber in France or Italy, or of a House of Commons in England, are often far graver than those involved in the choice of A or B to be executive chief magistrate for four years, the commotion and excitement, the amount of "organization," of speaking, writing, telegraphing, and shouting, is incomparably greater in the United States. It is only the salient features of these contests that I shall attempt to sketch, for the detail is infinite.

The canvass usually lasts about four months. It begins soon after both of the great parties have chosen their candidate, *i.e.* before the middle of July; and it ends early in November, on the day when the presidential electors are chosen simultaneously in and by all the States. The summer heats and the absence of the richer sort of people at the seaside or mountain resorts keep down the excitement during July and August; it rises in September, and boils furiously through October.

The first step is for each nominated candidate to accept his nomination in a letter, sometimes as long as a pamphlet, setting forth his views of the condition of the nation and the policy which the times require. Such a letter is meant to strike the keynote for the whole orchestra of orators. It is, of course, published everywhere, extolled by friendly and dissected by hostile journals. Together with the "platform" adopted at the national party convention, it is the official declaration of party principles, to be referred to as putting the party case, no less than the candidate himself, before the nation.

While the candidate is composing his address, the work of organization goes briskly forward, for in American elections everything is held to depend on organization. A central or national party committee nominated by the national convention, and consisting of one member from each State, gets its members together and forms a plan for the conduct of the canvass. It raises money by appealing to the wealthy and zealous men of the party for subscriptions, and, of course, presses those above all who have received something in the way of an office or other gratification from the party.[1] It communicates with the leading statesmen and orators of the party, and arranges in what district of the country each shall take the stump. It issues shoals of pamphlets, and forms relations with party newspapers. It allots grants from the "campaign fund" to particular persons and State committees, to be spent by them for "campaign purposes," an elastic term which may cover a good deal of illicit expenditure. Enormous sums are sometimes gathered and disbursed by this committee, and the accounts submitted do not, as may be supposed, answer all the questions they suggest. The committee directs its speakers and its funds chiefly to the doubtful States, those in which eloquence or expenditure may turn the balance either way. There are seldom more than six or seven such States at any one election, possibly fewer.

The efforts of the national committee are seconded not only by State committees, but by an infinite number of minor organizations over the country, in the rural districts no less than in the cities. Some of these are permanent. Others are created for the election alone; and as they contemplate a short life, they make it a merry one. These "campaign clubs," which usually bear the candidates' names, are formed on every imaginable basis, that of locality, of race, of trade or profession, of university affiliation. There are Irish clubs, Italian clubs, German clubs, Scandinavian clubs, Polish clubs,[2] coloured (*i.e.* negro) clubs, Orange clubs. There are young men's clubs, lawyers' clubs, dry-goods clubs, insurance men's clubs, shoe and leather clubs. There are clubs of the graduates of various colleges. Their work consists in canvassing the voters, making up lists of friends, opponents, and doubtfuls, getting up processions and parades, holding meetings, and generally "booming all the time."

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[1] As a recent statute forbids the levying of assessments for party purposes on members of the Federal civil service, it is deemed prudent to have no Federal official on this committee, lest in demanding subscriptions from his subordinates he should transgress the law.

[2] At a "parade" of a Polish campaign club in New York in 1884 more than 1000 Polish citizens are reported as present.

This is mostly unpaid labour. But there are also thousands of paid agents at work, canvassing, distributing pamphlets or leaflets, lecturing on behalf of the candidate. It is in America no reproach to a political speaker that he receives a fee or a salary. Even men of eminence are permitted to receive not only their travelling expenses, but a round sum. Whether the candidate himself takes the field depends on his popular gifts. If he is a brilliant speaker his services are too valuable to be lost; and he is sent on a tour through the doubtful States, where he speaks for weeks together twice or thrice on most days, filling up the intervals with "receptions" at which he has to shake hands with hundreds of male callers, and be presented to ladies scarcely less numerous.[1] The leading men of the party are, of course, pressed into the service. Even if they dislike and have opposed the nomination of the particular candidate, party loyalty and a lively sense of favours to come force them to work for the person whom the party has chosen.[2] An eminent Irishmen or an eminent German is especially valuable for a stumping tour, because he influences the vote of his countrymen. Similarly each senator is expected to labour assiduously at his own State, where presumably his influence is greatest, and any refusal to do so is deemed a pointed disapproval of the candidate.

The committees print and distribute great quantities of campaign literature, pamphlets, speeches, letters, leaflets, and one can believe that this printed matter is more serviceable than it would be in England, because a larger part of the voters live in quiet country places, and like something to read in the evening. Even novelettes are composed in the interests of a candidate. I found mention of one, written by a literary colonel, in which "the lovers, while in the most romantic situation, are made to talk about the protective tariff. One-third of the book consists of love and tragedy, and the remainder is an argument for protection. (This is a large proportion of powder to jam.) Thousands of these have been distributed as campaign documents.' Sometimes a less ingenuous use is made of the press. On the very eve of the election of 1880, too late for a contradiction to obtain equal publicity, a forged letter, purporting to come from

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[1] Sometimes he stumps along a line of railroad, making ten minute speeches from the end platform of the last car.

[2] Exceptions are rare, but there was one distinguished senator who refused to take the field for his party's candidate in 1884.

Mr. Garfield, and expressing views on Chinese immigration and labour, distasteful to the Pacific States, was lithographed and scattered broadcast over California, where it told heavily against him. And in 1884, an extract, purporting to come from a pamphlet issued by the "London Free Trade Club" was circulated, in which that (non-existent) body was represented as declaring that "the salvation of England depends on the destruction of American manufactures, and this must be effected by means of free trade and the Democratic party."[1]

Most constant and effective of all is the action of the newspapers. The chief journals have for two or three months a daily leading article recommending their own and assailing the hostile candidate, with a swarm of minor editorial paragraphs bearing on the election. Besides these there are reports of speeches delivered, letters to the editor with the editor's comments at the end, stories about the candidates, statements as to the strength of each party in particular States, counties, and cities. An examination of a few of the chief newspapers during the months of September and October 1884, showed that their "campaign matter" of all kinds formed between one-half and one-third of the total letterpress of the paper (excluding advertisements), and this, be it remembered, every day during those two months. The most readable part of this matter consists in the reports of the opinion of individual persons, more or less prominent, on the candidate. You find, for instance, a paragraph stating that the Rev. Dr. A., president of such and such a college, or Mr. B., the philanthropist who is head of the Y Z Bank, or ex-Governor C., or Judge D., has said he thinks the candidate a model of chivalric virtue, or fit only for a felon's cell, as the case may be, and that he will vote for or against him accordingly.[2] Occasionally the prominent man is called on by an interviewer and gives a full statement of his views, or he writes to a young friend who has asked his advice a private letter, which is immediately published. The abundance of these expressions or citations of the opinions of private citizens supplies a curious evidence of the disposition of some sections in a democracy to look up to its intellectual and moral leaders. For the men thus appealed to are nearly all persons eminent by their character, ability, learning, or success in business; the merely rich man is cited but rarely, and as if his opinion did not matter, though of course his subscription may. Judges and lawyers, university dignitaries and literary men, are, next to the clergy,[1] the persons most often quoted.

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[1] It was also stated that English clubs sent money to be expended in paying Irish "ex-suspects" to persuade their countrymen to vote against the protectionist candidate!

[2] Sometimes a sort of amateur census is taken of the persons occupied in one place in some particular employment, as, for instance, of the professors in a particular college, or even of the clerks in a particular store, these being taken as samples of store-clerks or professors generally; and the party organ triumphantly claims that three-fourths of their votes will be cast for its candidate. Among the "throbs of Connecticut's pulse" described by a newspaper in the fall of 1884, I recollect an estimate of the "proclivities" of the workmen in the Willimantic mills in that State.

The function of the clergy in elections is very characteristic of the country and the occasion. They used during the period from 1820 to 1856 to give politics a wide berth, for not only would their advocacy of any particular cause have offended a section among their flocks, but the general sentiment condemned the immixture in politics of a clerical element. The struggle against slavery, being a moral issue, brought them into more frequent public activity. Since the close of that struggle they have again tended to retire. However, the excitement of a presidential election suspends all rules; and it sometimes happens that the charges brought against a candidate involve moral issues which are deemed, at least by partisans, to justify clerical intervention. In the contest of 1884, at any rate, ecclesiastics came well to the front. For months the newspapers were full of the opinions of clergymen. Sermons were reported if they seemed to bear upon the issue. Paragraphs appeared saying that such and such a pastor would carry three-fourths of his congregation with him, whereas the conduct of another in appearing at a meeting on behalf of the opposing candidate was much blamed by his flock. Not many ministers actually took the platform, though there was a general wish to have them as chairmen. But one, the late Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, did great execution by his powerful oratory, artillery all the more formidable because it was turned against the candidate of the party to which he had through his long life belonged.[2] Nor was there any feature in the canvass of that same candidate more remarkable than the assembly of 1018 clergymen of all denominations (including a Jewish rabbi), which gathered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, to meet him and assure him of their support on moral grounds immediately before the election day.[1]

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[1] An eminent Unitarian clergyman having written a letter condemning a candidate, the leading organ of that candidate in sneering at it, remarked that after all Dr. Clarke's coachman's vote was as good as Dr. Clarke's; to which it was rejoined by a hostile journalist that hundreds of voters would follow Dr. Clarke, and hundreds more be offended at this disrespectful reference to him.

[2] Mr. Beecher's attitude was deemed so formidable that a number of his

From a class usually excluded from politics by custom to a class excluded by law, the transition is easy. Women as a rule keep as much aloof from electoral contests in America as in continental Europe, and certainly more than in England, for I have never heard of their forming an organization to canvass the voters of a district in America, as the (Conservative) Primrose League has done all over England for five years past, and as several women's associations belonging to the Liberal party are now doing in London. Nor are women appointed delegates from any ward primary,[2] as ladies have lately been in some divisions of London. In no State of the Union can they vote at any State election, and therefore neither can they vote at Federal elections. However, the excitement of 1884 drew even women into the vortex. In various cities receptions were tendered by the ladies of each party to the candidate, receptions reported in the public press as politically significant. And a good many of the letters which appeared in the newspapers attacking or defending a candidate bore female signatures. The Women's Suffrage journal gave its support to the Republican party, but a section of the suffragists, incensed at the faithlessness or indifference of both of the parties to their claims, started a presidential candidate of their own, Mrs. Belva C. Lockwood, a lady practising law at Washington. She took the stump on her own behalf, but did not ultimately go to the poll.

Speaking and writing and canvassing are common to elections all over the world. What is peculiar to America is the amazing development of the "demonstration" as a means for raising enthusiasm. For three months, processions, usually with brass

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congregation were induced to issue a document stating that they did not intend to be influenced by him.

[1] One of the clerical speakers spoke of the opposite candidate as receiving the support of "rum, Romanism, and rebellion." This phrase, eagerly caught up, and repeated by hostile newspapers, incensed the Roman Catholics of New York, and was believed to have turned the election against the candidate in whose interest the alliteration was invented. Nothing so dangerous as a friend; especially when he is an amateur.

[2] Women, however, appear as delegates at the conventions of the Prohibition party.

bands, flags, badges, crowds of cheering spectators, are the order of the day and night from end to end of the country. The Young Men's Pioneer Club of a village in the woods of Michigan turns out in the summer evening; the Democrats or Republicans of Chicago or Philadelphia leave their business to march through the streets of these great cities. many thousands strong.

When a procession is exceptionally large it is called a Parade. In New York City, on the 29th of October 1884, the business men who supported Mr. James Gillespie Blaine held such a demonstration. They were organized by profession or occupation: the lawyers, 800 strong, forming one battalion, the dry-goods men another,[1] the Produce Exchange a third, the bankers a fourth, the brokers a fifth, the jewellers a sixth, the Petroleum Exchange a seventh, and so on *ad infinitum.*[2] They started from the Bowling-green near the south end of Manhattan Island, and marched right up the city along Broadway to Madison Square, where Mr. Blaine reviewed and addressed them. Rain fell incessantly, and the streets were deep with mud, but neither rain above nor mud below damped the spirits of this great army, which tramped steadily along, chanting various "campaign refrains," such as

"Five, Five, Five Cent Fare;"[3]

but most frequently

"Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine
We don't care a bit for the rain,
O—O—O—O—HI—O."[4]

There were said to have been 25,000 business men in this parade, which was followed soon after by another more miscellaneous Blaine parade of 60,000 Republicans, as well as (of course) by counter parades of Democrats.[1] A European, who stands amazed at the magnitude of these demonstrations, is apt to ask whether the result attained is commensurate with the money, time, and effort given to them. His American friends answer that, as with advertising, it is not to be supposed that shrewd and experienced men would thus spend their money unless convinced that the expenditure was reproductive. The parade and procession business, the crowds, the torches, the badges, the flags, the shouting, all this pleases the participants by making them believe they are effecting something; it impresses the spectators by showing them that other people are in earnest, it strikes the imagination of those who in country hamlets read of the doings in the great city. In short, it keeps up the "boom," and an American election is held to be, truly or falsely, largely a matter of booming.

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[1] It was stated that the first seven files of the 8000 dry-goods men who walked in this procession represented $150,000,000 (£30,000,000) worth of business.

[2] A dinner was given to Mr. Blaine under the auspices of two noted financial operators, at which two hundred of the wealthiest men in and near New York were present. This was intended to convey the impression that the solid commercial interests of the country were in his favour, but it was of course caught up and turned the other way by antagonists who wished to represent the financiers and rail way men as "monopolists and speculators," and therefore dangerous to the people.

[3] Mr. Cleveland had as Governor of New York State vetoed as unconstitutional a bill establishing a uniform fare of 5 cents on the New York City elevated railroads. This act was supposed to have alienated the working men and ruined his presidential prospects.

[4] In the State elections held in Ohio shortly beforehand the Republicans had been victorious, and the omen was gladly caught up.

If the cynical visitor smiles at these displays, he is constrained to admire the good-humour and good order which prevail. Neither party in the Northern, Middle, and Western States dreams of disturbing the parades or meetings of the other. You might believe, from the acclamations which accompany a procession, that the whole population was with it, for if opponents are present they do not hoot or hiss, and there are always enough sympathizers to cheer. During the hotly-contested elections of 1880, 1884, and 1888, hardly any collisions or disturbances were reported from California to Maine. Even in Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, where the old Southern party is apt to let its angry passions rise against the negroes and their white Republican allies, the breaches of order were in 1884 neither numerous nor serious.[2] There is a large and vicious mob in New York, Chicago, and Cincinnati, but it behaved perfectly well in the two former cities, though badly in the third at the October State elections. Over four-fifths of the Southern States perfect quiet prevailed. It is true that one party could there count on an overwhelming majority, so that there was no excuse for the one to bully nor any inducement for the other to show fight.

The maxim that nothing succeeds like success is nowhere so cordially and consistently accepted as in America. It is the corner-stone of all election work. The main effort of a candidate's orators and newspapers is to convince the people that their side is the winning one, for there are sure to be plenty of voters anxious to be on that side, not so much from any advantage to be gained for themselves as because reverence for "the People" makes them believe that the majority are right. Hence the exertions to prove that the Germans, or the Irish, or the working men are going for candidate X. or candidate Y. Hence the reports of specimen canvasses showing that seventy per cent of the clerks in a particular bank or eighty per cent of the professors in a particular theological college have declared themselves for X. Hence the announcements of the betting odds for a particular candidate, and the assertion that the supporters of the other man who had put large sums on him are now beginning to hedge.[1] But the best evidence to which a party can appeal is its winning minor elections which come off shortly before the great presidential one. In two States the choice of a governor and other State officers took place, till lately, within the month prior to the 8th of November, in two or three it still takes place in September. If the State is a safe one for the Republicans or the Democrats (as the case may be), the votes cast are compared with those cast at the last preceding similar election, and the inference drawn that one or other party is gaining. If it is a doubtful State, the interest is still more keen, and every nerve is strained to carry an election whose issue will presage, and by presaging contribute to, success in the presidential struggle.[2] Possibly the candidate or some of his ablest speakers stump this State; probably also it is drenched with money. The inferences from such a contest may be thought uncertain, because State elections are always complicated with local questions, and with the character of the particular candidates for State offices. But it is a maxim among politicians that in a presidential year local issues vanish, the voters being so warmed with party spirit that they go solid for their party in spite of all local or personal obstacles. The truth of this view was illustrated by the fact that Ohio often returns a majority of Democrats to Congress and has a Democratic majority in her own legislature, but has for several elections given a majority for the presidential candidate of the Republican party. The eagerness shown to carry the October elections in this great and often doubtful State used to be scarcely second to that displayed in the presidential contest. She has now put her fall elections later, and makes them coincide (every second term) with the presidential election, in order to avoid the tremendous strain which they had been forced to bear.[1] Before this change it was often made an argument why the party should select its candidate from Ohio, that this would give a better chance of winning the preliminary canter, and thereby securing the advantage of a presageful victory.[2]

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[1] In the Cleveland Business Men's parade it was alleged that 1500 lawyers had walked, one-third of them Republican "bolters"; but this number was doubtless exaggerated.

[2] In Baltimore the Democratic mob maltreated some of the letter-carriers, who, as Federal officials, were presumably Republicans, and there was a little rioting in Virginia.

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[1] There is a great deal of betting on elections, so much that bribery is often alleged to be practised by those who are heavily involved. The constitutions or statutes of some States make it an offence to give or take a bet on an election.

[2] "If the Republicans lose Ohio," said Mr. Schurz in 1884, "there will be a general landslide, and the election will be virtually over." It was currently reported that one party had sent $500,000 (£100,000) into Ohio for the fall elections.

So far I have described the contest as one between two parties and two candidates only. But it is usually complicated by the appearance of other minor parties and minor candidates who, although they have no chance of success, affect the main struggle by drawing off strength from one side or the other. In the last four elections the Prohibitionist party and the Greenback (now the Labour) party each held a national convention, nominated candidates for presidency and vice-presidency, and obtained at the polls a number of votes far too small to carry any single State, and therefore, of course, too small to choose any presidential electors, but sufficient to affect, perhaps to turn, the balance of strength between Republicans and Democrats in two or three of the doubtful States. The Prohibitionist candidate draws most of his votes from the Republican side; the Greenbacker or Labour man from the Democratic: hence there is a sort of tacit alliance during the campaign between the Republican organs and the Greenback party, between the Democratic organs and the Prohibitionists; and conversely much ill blood between Republicans and Prohibitionists, between Democrats and Greenbackers. In 1884, the Democrats charged the Republicans with secretly encouraging and supporting by money the candidature of General Benjamin F. Butler, nominated by the Greenbackers and Labour men, while the Republicans bitterly reproached the temperance people with playing into the hands of the liquor-loving Democrats. Any one can see what an opening these complications give for intrigue, and how much they add to the difficulty of predicting the result.

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[1] No State now holds an October State election, Indiana, whose election fell then, having put it later for the same reason.

[2] There is a touch of superstition in the value set in America upon the first indications of the popular sentiment, like that which made the Romans attach such weight to the vote of the century first called up to vote in the *comitia centuriata*. It was selected by lot, perhaps not merely because the advantage of calling first a century which he might know to be favourable to his own view or candidate was too great a one to be left to the presiding magistrate, but also because its declaration was thus deemed to be an indication of the will of the gods who governed the lot.

CHAPTER LXXII

THE ISSUES IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

UPON what does a presidential election turn? The presidential candidate has a double character. He is put forward as being individually qualified for the great place of executive head of the nation, because he is a man of integrity, energy, firmness, intellectual power, experience in affairs. He is also recommended as a prominent member of a great national party, inspired by its traditions, devoted to its principles, and prepared to carry them out not only in his properly executive capacity, but, what is more important, as the third branch of the legislature, armed with a veto on bills passed by Congress. His election may therefore be advocated or opposed either on the ground of his personal qualities or of his political professions and party affiliations. Here we have a marked difference between the American and European systems, because in England, France, Germany, and Italy, elections turn chiefly on the views of the parties, secondarily on the character of individual leaders, seeing that the leaders are not chosen directly by the people, but are persons who have come to the top in the legislatures of those countries, or have been (in Germany) raised to office by the Crown. In America therefore we have a source of possible confusion between issues of two wholly distinct kinds—those which affect the personal qualifications of the candidate, and those which regard the programme of his party.

Whether, in any given presidential election, the former or the latter class of issues are the more conspicuous and decisive, depends partly on the political questions which happen to be then before the people, partly on the more or less marked individuality of the rival candidates. From about 1850 down to 1876, questions, first of the extension of slavery, then of its extinction, then of the reconstruction of the Union, had divided the nation, and made every contest a contest of principles and of practical measures. Since the controversies raised by the war have been settled, there have been few real differences of political principle between the parties, and questions of personal fitness have therefore become relatively more important.

The object of each party naturally is to put forward as many good political issues as it can, claiming for itself the merit of having always been on the popular side. Any one who should read the campaign literature of the Republicans would fancy that they were opposed to the Democrats on many important points. When he took up the Democratic speeches and pamphlets he would be again struck by the serious divergences between the parties, which however would seem to arise, not on the points raised by the Republicans, but on other points which the Republicans had not referred to. In other words, the aim of each party is to force on its antagonist certain issues which the antagonist rarely accepts, so that although there is a vast deal of discussion and declamation on political topics, there are few on which either party directly traverses the doctrines of the other. Each pummels, not his true enemy, but a stuffed figure set up to represent that enemy. During the presidential elections of 1880 and 1884, for instance, the Republicans sought to force to the front the issue of Protection *versus* Free Trade, which the Democrats refused to accept, having avowed Protectionists within their own ranks, and knowing that the bulk of the nation was at most prepared only for certain reductions in the tariff. Hence the odd spectacle was presented of Republican orators advocating a protective tariff on a thousand platforms, and hardly any Democrat referring to the subject except to say that he would not refer to it. Both sides declared against monopolists and the power of corporations. Both professed to be the friends of civil service reform. Both promised to protect the rights of the Americans all over the world, to withstand Bismarck in his attacks on American bacon, and to rescue American citizens from British dungeons. Both, however, were equally zealous for peace and good-will among the nations, and had no idea of quarrelling with any European power.

What impression did these appeals and discussions make upon the voters? Comparatively little. The American, like the Englishman, usually votes with his party, right or wrong, and the fact that there is little distinction of view between the parties makes it easier to stick to your old friends. The tariff issue did, however, tell in favour of the Republicans in 1884 and in 1888, and while the Southern men voted against the Republican party because it was the party which had carried on the war and crushed Secession, the bulk of the North voted for that party for the same reason. It was associations of the past rather than arguments on the present and the future that determined men's action.

When politics are slack, personal issues come to the front. They are in one sense small, but not for that reason less exciting. Whoever has sat in any body of men, from a college debating society up to a legislative chamber, knows that no questions raise so much warmth and are debated with so much keenness as questions affecting the character and conduct of individual men. They evoke some of what is best and much of what is worst in human nature. In a presidential election it is impossible to avoid discussing the personal merits of the candidates, because much depends on those merits. It has also proved impossible to set limits to the discussion. Unmitigated publicity is a condition of eminence in America; and the excitement in one of these contests rises so high that (at elections in which personal issues are prominent) the canons of decorum which American custom at other times observes, are cast aside by speakers and journalists. The air is thick with charges, defences, recriminations, till the voter knows not what to believe. Imagine all the accusations brought against all the candidates for the 670 seats in the English parliament concentrated on one man, and read by sixty millions of people daily for three months, and you will still fail to realize what is the tempest of invective and calumny which hurtles round the head of a presidential candidate.

These censures are referable to three classes. One includes what is called the candidate's "war record." To have been disloyal to the Union in the hour of its danger is a reproach. To have fought for the North, still more to have led a Northern regiment or division, covers a multitude of sins. It is the greatest of blessings for America that she fights so seldom, for in no country do military achievements carry a candidate farther, not that the people love war, for they do not, but because success in a sphere so remote from their ordinary life touches their imagination, marks a man out from his fellows, associates his name with their passionate patriotism, gives him a claim on the gratitude, not of a party, but of the nation as a whole. His prowess in repulsing the British troops at New Orleans made Andrew Jackson twice President, in spite of grave faults of temper and judgment. Some Indian skirmishes fixed the choice of the Whig party in 1840 upon William H. Harrison, though his competitor for the nomination was Henry Clay. Zachary Taylor was known only by his conduct of the Mexican War, when he was elected by the same party in 1848. The failure of General Grant as President in his first term, a failure which those who most heartily recognized his honour and patriotism could not deny, did not prevent his re-election in 1872, and the memory of his services would have given him a third nomination in 1880, but for the adverse precedent set by Washington.

Far more serious than the absence of a war record are charges of the second class—those impeaching the nominee's personal integrity. These no candidate need hope to escape. Few men can have passed years in a State legislature or State or city office, or Congress, without coming into contact with disreputable persons, and occasionally finding themselves in situations capable of being misrepresented. They may have walked warily, they may not have swerved from the path of rectitude, but they must have been tempted to do so, and it requires no great invention to add details which give a bad look to the facts. As some men of note, from whom better things had been expected, have lapsed, a lapse by a man of standing seems credible. It is therefore an easy task for the unscrupulous passions which a contest rouses to gather up rumours, piece out old though unproved stories of corruption, put the worst meaning on doubtful words, and so construct a damning impeachment, which will be read in party journals by many voters who never see the defence. The worst of this habit of universal invective is that the plain citizen, hearing much which he cannot believe, finding foul imputations brought even against those he has reason to respect, despairs of sifting the evidence in any given case, and sets down most of the charges to malice and "campaign methods,"[1] while concluding that the residue is about equally true of all politicians alike. The distinction between good and bad men is for many voters practically effaced, and you have the spectacle of half the honest men supporting for the headship of the nation a person whom the other half declare to be a knave. Extravagant abuse produces a reaction, and makes the honest supporters of a candidate defend even his questionable acts. And thus the confidence of the country in the honour of its public men is lowered.

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[1] The inquiry into a candidate's honesty is pursued so keenly that even his property tax returns are scrutinized to found charges of his having endeavoured to evade the law. Such a charge played a great part in a recent presidential contest.

Less frequent, but more offensive, are the charges made against the private life of a candidate, particularly in his relations with women. American opinion is highly sensitive on this subject. Nothing damages a man more than a reputation for irregularity in these relations; nothing therefore opens a more promising field to slander, and to the coarse vulgarity which is scarcely less odious, even if less mendacious, than slander itself.

These are the chief heads of attack. But there is really nothing in the life or habits of a candidate out of which materials for a reproach may not be drawn. Of one it is said that he is too fond of eating, of another that though he rents a pew in Dr. Y——'s church, he is more frequently seen in a Roman Catholic place of worship, of a third that he deserted his wife twenty-five years ago, of a fourth that he is an atheist. His private conversations are reported; and when he denies the report, third persons are dragged in to refute his version. Nor does criticism stop with the candidate himself. His leading supporters are arraigned and dissected. A man's surroundings do no doubt throw some light upon him. If you are shown into a library, you derive an impression from the books on the shelves and the pictures on the wall; much more then may you be influenced by the character of a man's personal friends and political associates, if they are of a conspicuously good or evil type. But such methods of judging must be applied cautiously. American electioneering carries them beyond reasonable limits.

I do not mean that elections always bring these personal issues prominently to the front. Sometimes, where the candidates excite no strong enthusiasm or repulsion, they remain in the background. Their intrusion into what ought to be a contest of principles is unavoidable when the personal qualities of a candidate may affect the welfare of the country. But it has the unfortunate result of tending to draw attention away from political discussions, and thereby lessening what may be called the educational value of the campaign. A general election in England seems better calculated to instruct the masses of the people in the principles as well as the practical issues of politics, than the longer and generally hotter presidential contest in America. The average intelligence of the voter (excluding the negroes) is higher in America than in Britain, and his familiarity not only with the passwords and catchwords of politics but with the structure of his own government is much greater. But in Britain the contest is primarily one of programmes and not of persons. The leaders on each side are freely criticized, and most people are largely influenced by their judgment of the prime minister, and of the person who will become prime minister if the existing ministry be dismissed. Still the men are almost always overshadowed by the principles which they respectively advocate, and as they are men already fully known, men on whom invective and panegyric have been poured for years, there is little inducement to rake up or invent tales against them. Hence controversy turns on the needs of the country, and on the measures which each party puts forward; attacks on a ministry are levelled at their public acts instead of their private characters. Americans who watch general elections in England say that they find in the speeches of English candidates more appeal to reason and experience, more argument and less sentimental rhetoric, than in the discourses of their own campaign orators. To such a general judgment there are, of course, many exceptions. I have read American election speeches, such as those of Mr. Beecher, whose vigorous thinking was in the highest degree instructive as well as stimulative; and the speaking of English candidates is probably, regarded as mere speaking, less effective than that of the American stump.

An examination of the causes which explain this difference belongs to another part of this book. Here I will only remark that the absence from English elections of flags, uniforms, torches, brass bands, parades, and all the other appliances employed in America, for making the people "enthuse," leaves the field more free for rational discussion. Add to this that whereas the questions discussed on English platforms during the last fifty years have been mainly questions needing argument, such as that of the corn laws in the typical popular struggle which Cobden and Bright and Villiers led, the most exciting theme for an American speaker during a whole generation was one—the existence and extension of slavery—which specially called for emotional treatment. The subjects which now chiefly need to be debated, such as the regulation of the tariff, competing plans of liquor legislation, the currency and labour questions, are so difficult to sift thoroughly before a popular audience that the orator has been apt to evade them or to deal in sounding commonplaces. The tariff issue cannot be evaded much longer, and its discussion may force speakers and hearers to think more closely than has been usual of late years.

Although, however, the presidential contest does less for the formation of political thought and diffusion of political knowledge than might have been hoped from the immense efforts put forth and the intelligence of the voters addressed, it rouses and stirs the public life of the country. One can hardly imagine what the atmosphere of American politics would be without this quadrennial storm sweeping through it to clear away stagnant vapours, and recall to every citizen the sense of his own responsibility for the present welfare and future greatness of his country. Nowhere does government by the people through the people for the people take a more directly impressive and powerfully stimulative form than in the choice of a chief magistrate by twelve millions of citizens voting on one day.

CHAPTER LXXIII

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SEVERAL questions may have occurred to the European reader who has followed the foregoing account of presidential nominations and elections.

The most obvious is—How comes it that a system of nomination by huge party assemblies has grown up so unlike anything which the free countries of Europe have seen?

The nominating convention is the natural and legitimate outgrowth of two features of the Constitution, the restricted functions of Congress and the absolute sovereignty of the people. It was soon perceived that under the rule of party, a party must be united on its candidate in order to have a prospect of success. There was therefore need for a method of selecting the candidate which the whole of a party would recognize as fair and entitled to respect. At first the representatives of the party in Congress assumed the right of nomination. But it was presently felt that they were not entitled to it, for they had not been chosen for any such purpose, and the President was not constitutionally responsible to them, but rather set up to check them. When the congressional caucus had been discredited, the State legislatures tried their hands at nominations; but acting irregularly, and with a primary regard to local sentiment, they failed to win obedience. It began to be seen that whom the people were to elect the people must also nominate. Thus presently the tumultuous assemblies of active politicians were developed into regular representative bodies, modelled after Congress, and giving to the party in each State exactly the same weight in nominating as the State possessed in voting. The elaborate nominating scheme of primaries and conventions which was being constructed for the purpose of city, State, and congressional elections, was applied to the election of the President, and the national convention was the result. We may call it an effort of nature to fill the void left in America by the absence of the European parliamentary or cabinet system, under which an executive is called into being out of the legislature by the majority of the legislature. In the European system no single act of nomination is necessary, because the leader of the majority comes gradually to the top in virtue of his own strength.[1] In America there must be a single and formal act: and this act must emanate from the people, since it is to them that the party leader, when he becomes chief magistrate, will be responsible. There is not quite so strong a reason for entrusting to the convention the function of declaring the aims and tenets of the party in its platform, for this might properly be done by a caucus of the legislature. But as the President is, through his veto power, an independent branch of the legislature, the moment of nominating him is apt for a declaration of the doctrines, whereof the party makes him the standard-bearer.

What effects has the practice of nomination by conventions had upon the public life of the country? Out of several I select two. It makes political struggles turn more upon men and less upon measures than might have been expected in a country where equality is so fully established, and the citizens are so keenly interested in public questions. The victory of a party in a presidential election depends upon its being unanimous in its support of a particular candidate. It must therefore use every effort to find, not necessarily the best man, but the man who will best unite it. In the pursuit of him, it is distracted from its consideration of the questions on which it ought to appeal to the country, and may form its views on them hastily or loosely. The convention is the only body authorized to declare the tenets and practical programme of the party. But the duty of declaring them is commonly overshadowed by the other duty of choosing the candidate, which naturally excites warmer feelings in the hearts of actual or potential office-holders. Accordingly delegates are chosen by local conventions rather as the partisans of this or that aspirant than as persons of political ability or moral weight; and the function of formulating the views of the party may be left to, and ill-discharged by, men of an inferior type.

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[1] The nearest parallel to the American nominating system is the election of the leader of a party by the Opposition in the House of Commons, of which there has been only one instance, the choice of Lord Hartington by the Liberal members in that House in 1875; and on that occasion the other candidates withdrew before a vote was needed. What the Americans call "House caucuses," *i.e.* meetings of a party in the larger House of the legislature, are not uncommon in England.

A further result will have been foreseen by those who have realized what these conventions are like. They are monster meetings. Besides the eight hundred delegates there are some ten to fourteen thousand spectators on the floor and in the galleries. It goes without saying that such a meeting is capable neither of discussing political questions and settling a political programme, nor of deliberately weighing the merits of rival aspirants for the nomination. Its programme must be presented to it cut and dry, and this is the work of a small committee. In choosing a candidate, it must follow a few leaders.[1] And what sort of leaders do conventions tend to produce? Two sorts—the intriguer and the declaimer. There is the man who manipulates delegates, and devises skilful combinations. There is also the orator, whose physical gifts, courage, and readiness enable him to browbeat antagonists, overawe the chairman, and perhaps, if he be possessed of eloquence, carry the multitude away in a fit of enthusiasm. For men of wisdom and knowledge, not seconded by a commanding voice and presence, there is no demand, and little chance of usefulness, in these tempestuous halls.

Why, however, it may also be asked, should conventions be so pre-eminently tempestuous, considering that they are not casual concourses, but consist of persons duly elected, and are governed by a regular code of procedure? The reason may be found in the fact that in them are united the two conditions which generate excitement, viz. very large numbers and important issues to be determined. In no other modern assemblies[2] do these conditions concur. Modern deliberative assemblies are comparatively small—the House of Representatives has only 325 members; the French Chamber 584; while in the British House of Commons there is sitting space for only 400. Large popular gatherings, on the other hand, such as mass meetings, are excitable in virtue of their size, but have nothing to do but pass resolutions, and there is seldom controversy over these, because such meetings are attended only by those who agree with the summoners. But a national convention consists of more than eight hundred delegates, as many alternates, and some twelve thousand spectators. It is the hugest mass meeting the world knows of. Not only, therefore, does the sympathy of numbers exert an unequalled force, but this host, larger than the army with which the Greeks conquered at Marathon, has an issue of the highest and most exciting nature to decide, an issue which quickens the pulse even of those who read in cold blood afterwards how the votes fell as the roll of States was called, and which thrills those who see and listen, and, most of all, those who are themselves concerned as delegates, with an intensity of emotion surpassing, in proportion to the magnitude of the issue, that which attends the finish of a well-contested boat race. If you wish to realize the passionate eagerness of an American convention, take the House of Commons or the French Chamber during a division which is to decide the fate of a ministry and a policy, and raising the numbers present twenty-fold, imagine the excitement twenty-fold hotter. Wanting those wonderful scenes which a great debate and division in Parliament provide the English with, America has evolved others not less dramatic. The contrast between the two countries is perhaps most marked in this, that in Parliament the strife is between two parties, in an American Convention between the adherents of different leaders belonging to the same party. We might have expected that in the more democratic country more would turn upon principles, less upon men. It is exactly the other way. The struggle in a convention is over men, not over principles.

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[1] Hamilton had acutely remarked in 1788 that the larger an assembly the greater is the power of a few in it. See Vol. I. p. 195.

[2] In the ancient world the assemblies of great democratic cities like Athens or Syracuse presented both these conditions; they had large numbers present, and almost unlimited powers. But they were at any rate permanent bodies, accustomed to meet frequently, composed of men who knew one another, who respected certain leaders, and applauded the same orators. The American convention consists of men who come together once only in their lives, and then for a week or less.

These considerations may serve to explain to a European the strange phenomena of a convention. But his inquiry probably extends itself to the electoral campaign which follows. "Why," he asks, "is the contest so much longer, more strenuous, and more absorbing than the congressional elections, or than any election struggle in Europe, although Europe is agitated by graver problems than now occupy America? And why does a people externally so cool, self-contained, and unimpulsive as the American work itself up into a fever of enthusiasm over an issue of little permanent importance between two men, neither of whom will do much good or can do much harm?"

The length of the contest is a survival. The Americans themselves regret it, for it sadly interrupts both business and pleasure. It is due to the fact that when communication was difficult over a rough and thinly-settled country, several months were needed to enable the candidates and their orators to go round. Now railways and telegraphs have drawn the continent so much together that five or six weeks would be sufficient. That the presidential election is fought more vehemently than congressional elections seems due to its coming only half as often; to the fact that the President is the dispenser of Federal patronage, and to the habit formed in days when the President was the real head of the party, and his action in foreign affairs was important, of looking on his election as the great trial of party strength. Besides, it is the choice of one officer by the whole country, a supreme political act in which every voter has a share, and the same share; an act which fills the whole of the party in all of the States with the sense that it is feeling and thinking and willing as one heart and mind. This simultaneity of effort, this concentration of interest upon one person and one polling day, gives to the struggle a sort of tension not to be looked for where a number of elections of different persons are going on in as many different spots, nor always at the same time. In congressional elections each constituency has to think first of itself and its own candidate. In the presidential elections all eyes are fixed on the same figure; the same personal as well as political issue is presented to the nation. Each polling district in a State, each State in the Union, emulates every other in the efforts it puts forth to carry the party ticket.

To explain why the hard-headed self-possessed Americans go so wild with excitement at election times is a more difficult task. See what the facts are: There has not been a single presidential candidate, since Abraham Lincoln's re-election in 1864 (always excepting General Grant), of whom his friends could say that he had done anything to command the gratitude of the nation. Some of these candidates had been skilful party leaders, others had served with credit in the Civil War. None could be called distinguished in the sense in which, I will not say, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marshall, Webster, but J. Q. Adams, Clay, Benton, Calhoun, Seward, Stanton, and Chase, were distinguished men. However, let us take Mr. Blaine and Mr. Cleveland. One had been Speaker of the House, and was unquestionably a skilful debater in Congress, an effective speaker on a platform, a man socially attractive, never forgetting a face or a service. The other had made a shrewd and upright Mayor of Buffalo and Governor of New York State. Compare the services rendered to the country by them, or by any other candidate of recent times, with those of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour, and Victor Emmanuel to Italy, of Bismarck and Moltke to Germany, even of Thiers and Gambetta to France in her hour of peril. Yet the enthusiasm shown for Mr. Blaine (who seems to have drawn out the precious fluid at a higher temperature than his rival), the demonstrations made in his honour wherever he appeared, equalled anything done, in their several countries, for these heroes of Italy, Germany, or France. As for England, where two great political leaders, towering far above their fellows, have of late years excited the warmest admiration and the bitterest dislike from friends and foes, imagine eight hundred English barristers turning out from the Temple and Lincoln's Inn to walk in slow procession from London Bridge to South Kensington, shouting themselves hoarse for Gladstone or Disraeli!

In trying to account for this fact, it is well to begin by taking the bull by the horns. Is the world right in deeming the Americans a cool and sober people? The American is shrewd and keen, his passion seldom obscures his reason; he keeps his head in moments when a Frenchman, or an Italian, or even a German, would lose it. Yet he is also of an excitable temper, with emotions capable of being quickly and strongly stirred. That there is no contradiction between these qualities appears from the case of the Scotch, who are both more logical and more cautious in affairs than the English, but are also more enthusiastic, more apt to be swept away by a passionate movement.[1] Moreover, the Americans like excitement. They like it for its own sake, and go wherever they can find it. They surrender themselves to the enjoyment of this pleasure the more willingly because it is comparatively rare, and relieves the level tenor of their ordinary life. Add to this the further delight which they find in any form of competition. The passion which in England expresses itself in the popular eagerness over a boat race or a horse race, extends more widely in America to every kind of rivalry and struggle. The presidential election, in which two men are pitted against one another over a four months course for the great prize of politics, stirs them like any other trial of strength and speed; sets them betting on the issue, disposes them to make efforts for a cause in which their deeper feelings may be little engaged.

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[1] Sir Walter Scott remarks of Edinburgh, early in the eighteenth century, that its mob was one of the fiercest in Europe. The history of the Covenant from 1638 downwards is full of episodes which indicate how much more excitable is Scotch than English blood.

These tendencies are intensified by the vast area over which the contest extends, and the enormous multitude that bears a part in it. The American imagination is peculiarily sensitive to the impression of great size. "A big thing" is their habitual phrase of admiration. In Europe, antiquity is what chiefly commands the respect of some minds, novelty what rouses the interest of others. Beyond the Atlantic, the sense of immensity, the sense that the same thought and purpose are animating millions of other men in sympathy with himself, lifts a man out of himself, and sends him into transports of eagerness and zeal about things intrinsically small, but great through the volume of human feeling they have attracted. It is not the profundity of an idea or emotion, but its lateral extension which most quickly touches the American imagination. For one man who can feel the former a hundred are struck by the latter; and he who describes America must remember that he has always to think first of the masses.

These considerations may help to explain the disproportion that strikes a European between the merits of the presidential candidate and the blazing enthusiasm which he evokes. It is not really given to him as an individual, it is given to the party personified in him, because he bears its banner, and its fervour is due, not even so much to party passion as to the impressionist character of the people, who desire to be excited, desire to demonstrate, desire, as English undergraduates say, "to run with the boats," and cheer the efforts of the rowers. As regards the details of the demonstrations, the parades and receptions, the badges and brass bands and triumphal arches, any one can understand why the masses of the people—those who in Europe would be called the lower middle and working classes—should relish these things, which break the monotony of their lives, and give them a sense of personal participation in a great movement. Even in London, least externally picturesque among European cities, when the working men turn out for a Hyde Park meeting they come marshalled in companies under the banners of their trade unions or other societies, carrying devices, and preceded by music. They make a somewhat scrubby show, for England does not know how to light up the dulness of her skies and streets by colour in costume or variety in design. But the taste for display is there as it is in human nature everywhere. In England, the upper class is shy of joining in any such "functions," even when they have a religious tinge. Its fastidiousness and sense of class dignity are offended. But in America, the sentiment of equality is so pervading that the rich and cultivated do not think of scorning the popular procession; or if some do feel such scorn, they are careful to conceal it. The habit of demonstrating with bands and banners and emblems was formed in days when the upper class was very small, and would not have dreamt of standing aloof from anything which interested the crowd; and now, when the rich and cultivated have grown to be as numerous, and, in most respects, as fastidious as the parallel class in Europe, the habit is too deeply rooted to be shaken. Nobody thinks of sneering. To do as the people do is a tribute to the people's majesty. And the thousand lawyers who shout "James G. Blaine, O-h-i-o," as they march through the October mud of Broadway, have no more sense that they are making themselves ridiculous than the European noble who backs with repeated obeisances out of the presence of his sovereign.

CHAPTER LXXIV

TYPES OF AMERICAN STATESMEN

As trees are known by their fruits, and as different systems of government evidently tend to produce different types of statesmanship, it is pertinent to our examination of the American party system to inquire what are the kinds of statesmen which it engenders and ripens to maturity. A democracy, not less than any other form of government, needs great men to lead and inspire the people. The excellence therefore of the methods democracy employs may fairly enough be tested by the excellence of the statesmen whom these methods call forth. Europeans are wont to go farther, and reason from the character of the statesmen to the character of the people, a convenient process, because it seems easier to know the careers and judge the merits of persons than of nations, yet one not universally applicable. In the free countries of Europe, the men who take the lead in public affairs may be deemed fair specimens of its best talent and character, and fair types, possibly of the virtues of the nation, though the temptations of politics are great, and certainly of its practical gifts. But in two sorts of countries one cannot so reason from the statesmen to the masses. In despotic monarchies the minister is often merely the king's favourite, who has risen by unworthy arts, or, at any rate, not by merit; and in a democracy where birth and education give a man little advantage in the race, a political career may have become so unattractive as compared with other pursuits that the finest or most ambitious spirits do not strive for its prizes, but generally leave them to men of the second order.

This second case is, as we have seen, to some extent the case of America. We must not therefore take her statesmen as types of the highest or strongest American manhood. The national qualities come out fully in them, but not always in their best form. I speak of the generations that have grown up since the great men of the Revolution epoch died off. Some of those men were the peers of the best European statesmen of the time: one of them rises in moral dignity above all his European contemporaries. The generation to which J. Q. Adams, Jackson, Webster, Clay, Calhoun, and Benton belonged is less impressive, perhaps because they failed to solve a question which may have been too hard for any one to solve. Yet the men I have mentioned were striking personalities who would have made a figure in any country. Few of the statesmen of the third or Civil War period enjoyed more than a local reputation when it began, but in its course several of them developed remarkable powers, and one became a national hero. The fourth generation is now upon the stage. The Americans confess that not many who belong to it have as yet won fame. The times, they remark, are comparatively quiet. What is wanted is not so much an impassioned popular leader nor a great philosophic legislator as men who will administer the affairs of the nation with skill and rectitude, and who, fortified by careful study and observation, will grapple with the economic problems which the growth of the country makes urgent. I admit this, but think that much must also be ascribed to the character of the party system which, as we have seen, is unfavourable to the development of the finest gifts. Let us note what are the types which that system displays to us.

In such countries as England, France, Germany, and Italy there is room and need for five sorts of statesmen. Men are wanted for the management of foreign and colonial policy, men combining the talents of a diplomatist with a wide outlook over the world's horizon. The needs of social and economic reform, grave in old countries with the mistakes of the past to undo, require a second kind of statesman with an aptitude for constructive legislation. Thirdly there is the administrator who can manage a department with diligence and skill and economy. Fourthly comes the parliamentary tactician, whose function it is to understand men, who frames cabinets and is dexterous in humouring or spurring a representative assembly.[1] Lastly we have the leader of the masses, who, whether or no he be a skilful parliamentarian, thinks rather of the country than of the chamber, knows how to watch and rouse the feelings of the multitude, and rally a great party to the standard which he bears aloft. The first of these has no need for eloquence; the second and third can get on without it; to the fourth it is almost, yet not absolutely, essential; it is the life breath of the fifth.[1]

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[1] Englishmen will think of the men who framed the new Poor Law as specimens of the second class, of Sir G. C. Lewis as a specimen of the third, of Lord Palmerston as a specimen of the fourth. The aptitudes of the third and fourth were united in Sir Robert Peel.

Let us turn to America. In America there are few occasions for the first sort of statesman, while the conditions of a Federal government, with its limited legislative sphere, are unfavourable to the second, as frequently changing cabinets are to the third. It is chiefly for persons of the fourth and fifth classes we must look. Persons of those classes we shall find, but in a different shape and guise from what they would assume in Europe. American politics seem at this moment to tend to the production of two types, the one of whom may be called *par excellence* the man of the desk or of the legislature, the other the man of the convention and the stump. They resemble the fourth and fifth of our European types, but with instructive differences.

The first of these types is usually a shrewd, cool, hard-headed man of business. He is such a man as one would find successful in the law or in commerce if he had applied his faculties to those vocations. He has mostly been, is often still, a practising counsel and attorney. He may lack imagination and width of view; but he has a tight grip of facts, a keen insight into men, and probably also tact in dealing with them. That he has come to the front shows him to possess a resolute and tenacious will, for without it he must have been trodden down in the fierce competition of a political career. His independence is limited by the necessity of keeping step with his party, for isolated action counts for little in America, but the tendency to go with one's party is so inbred there that a man feels less humiliated by waiving his private views than would be the case in Europe. Such compliance does not argue want of strength. As to what is called "culture," he has often at least a susceptibility to it, with a wish to acquire it which, if he has risen from humble beginnings, may contrast oddly with the superficial roughness of his manner. He is a ready and effective rather than a polished speaker, and is least agreeable when, forsaking the solid ground of his legal or administrative knowledge, he attempts the higher flights of eloquence.

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[1] It need hardly be said that the characteristic attributes of these several types are often found united in the same person; indeed no one can rise high who does not combine at least two of the four latter.

Such a man does not necessarily make his first reputation in an assembly. He may begin as governor of a State or mayor of a large city, and if he earns a reputation there, can make pretty sure of going on to Congress if he desires it. In any case, it is in administration and the legislative work which deals with administration that he wins his spurs. The sphere of local government is especially fitted to develop such talents, and to give that peculiar quality I have been trying to describe. It makes able men of affairs; men fit for the kind of work which needs the combination of a sound business head and the power of working along with others. One may go further and say, that this sort of talent is the talent which during the last half-century has been most characteristic of the American people. Their greatest achievements have lain in the internal development of their country by administrative shrewdness, ingenuity, promptitude, and an unequalled dexterity in applying the principle of association, whether by means of private corporations or of local public or quasi-public organisms. These national characteristics reappear in Federal politics, not always accompanied by the largeness of vision and mastery of the political and economic sciences which that wider sphere demands.

The type I am trying to describe is less brilliant than those modern Europe has learned to admire in men like Bismarck or Cavour, Thiers or Gambetta, perhaps one may add, Tisza or Minghetti. But then the conditions required for the rise of the last-named men do not exist in America, nor is her need for them pressing. America would have all she wants if such statesmen as I have described were more numerous; and if a philosophic mind, capable of taking in the whole phenomena of transatlantic society, and propounding comprehensive solutions for its problems, were more common among the best of them. Persons of this type have hitherto been most frequently found in the Senate, to which they usually rise from the House of Representatives or from a State legislature. They are very useful there; indeed, it is they who have given it that, apparently now declining, authority which it has enjoyed.

The other kind of statesman is the product of two factors which give to American politics their peculiar character, viz. an enormous multitude of voting citizens and the existence of a wonderful network of party organizations for the purpose of selecting and carrying candidates for office. To move the masses, a man must have the gifts of oratory; to rule party committees, he must be a master of intrigue. The stump and the committee-room are his sphere. There is a great deal of campaign speaking to be done at State elections, at congressional elections, above all, in presidential campaigns. It does not flow in such a perennial torrent as in England, for England has since 1876 become the most speech-flooded country in the world, but it is more copious than in France, Italy, or Germany. The audiences are less ignorant than those of Europe, but their critical standard is not higher; and whereas in England it is Parliament that forms most speakers and creates the type of political oratory, Congress renders no such service to America. There is therefore, I think, less presumption in America than in Europe that the politician who makes his way by oratory is a man either of real eloquence or of vigorous thinking power. Able, however, he must be. He is sure to have fluency, a power of touching either the emotions or the imagination, a command of sonorous rhetoric. Probably he has also humour and a turn for quick retort. In fact, he must have the arts—we all know what they are—which please the multitude; arts not blamable in themselves, but needing to be corrected by occasional appearances before a critical audience. These arts joined to a powerful voice and a forcible personality will carry a man far. If he can join to them a ready and winning address, a geniality of manner if not of heart, he becomes what is called magnetic. Now, magnetism is among the highest qualities which an American popular leader can possess. Its presence may bring him to the top. Its absence may prevent him from getting there. It makes friends for him wherever he goes. It immensely enhances his powers in the region of backstairs politics.

For besides the visible work on the stump, there is the invisible work of the committee-room, or rather of the inner conclave, whose resolves are afterwards registered in the committee, to be still later laid before the convention. The same talent for intrigue which in monarchies or oligarchies is spent within the limits of a court or a knot of ruling families, here occupies itself with bosses and rings and leaders of political groups. To manipulate these men and groups, to know their weaknesses, their ambitions, their jealousies, to play upon their hopes and fears, attaching some by promises, entrapping others through their vanity, browbeating others into submission, forming combinations in which each partisan's interest is so bound up with that of the aspiring statesman that he is sure to stand faithfully by his chief—all this goes a long way to secure advancement under the party system.

It may be thought that between such aptitudes and the art of oratory there is no necessary connection. There are intriguers who are nothing but intriguers, useless on the stump or on the platform of a convention. But fluent oratory, as distinguished from eloquence, is an art which most able men can acquire with practice. In popularly-governed countries it is as common as it is worthless. And a link between the platform and the committee-room is found in the quality of magnetism. The magnetic man attracts individuals just as he captivates masses. Where oratory does not need either knowledge or reflection, because the people are not intent upon great questions, or because the parties evade them, where power of voice and skill in words, and ready sympathy with the feelings and prejudices of the crowd, are enough to command the ear of monster meetings, there the successful speaker will pass for a statesman. He will seem a fit man to put forward for high office, if he can but persuade the managers to run him; and therefore the other side of his activity is spent among and upon the managers.

It sometimes happens that the owner of these gifts is also a shrewd, keen, practical man, so that the first type is blended with the second. Nor is there anything to prevent the popular speaker and skilled intriguer from also possessing the higher attributes of statesmanship. This generation has seen the conjunction both in America and in France. But the conjunction is rare; not only because these last-named attributes are themselves rare, but because the practice of party intrigue is unfavourable to their development. It narrows a man's mind and distorts his vision. His eye, accustomed to the obscurity of committee-rooms, cannot range over the wide landscape of national questions. Habits of argument formed on the stump seldom fit a man to guide a legislature. In none of the greatest public men that have adorned America do we discern the features of the type just sketched. Hamilton was no intriguer, though he once executed a brilliant piece of strategy.[1] Neither was Clay or Webster. Jefferson, who added an eminent talent for party organization and management to his powers as a thinker and writer, was no speaker; and one might go through the whole list without finding one man of the first historic rank in whom the art of handling committees and nominating conventions was developed to that pitch of excellence to which far inferior men have now brought it. National conventions offer the best field for the display of the peculiar kind of talent which this type of statesman exhibits. To rouse eight hundred delegates and ten thousand spectators needs powerful lungs, a striking presence, address, and courage. A man capable enough in Congress may fail in this arena. But less than half the work of a convention is done on the public stage. Delegates have to be seen in private, combinations arranged, mines laid and those of the opponent discovered and countermined, a distribution of the good things in the gift of the party settled with swarms of hungry aspirants. Easy manners, tact, and suppleness, a reputation for remembering and requiting good turns and ill turns—in fact, many of the qualities which make a courtier are the qualities which the intrigues of a convention require, develop, and perfect.

Besides such causes inherent in the present party system as check the growth of first-class statesmen in America, there are two springing from her constitutional arrangements which must not be forgotten. One is the disconnection of Congress from the executive. How this works to prevent true leadership has been already explained.[2] Another is the existence of States, each of which has a political life and distinct party organization of its own. Men often rise to eminence in a State without making their mark in national politics. They may become virtual masters of the State either in a legitimate way by good service to it or in an illegitimate way as its bosses. In either case they have to be reckoned with when a presidential election comes round, and are able, if the State be a doubtful one, to dictate their terms. Thus they push their way to the front without having ever shown the qualities needed for guiding the nation; they crowd out better men, and they make party leadership and management even more of a game than under the spoils system and the convention system it naturally becomes. The State vote comes to be in national politics what the ward vote is in city politics, a commodity which a boss or ring can dispose of; the power of a man who can influence it is greater than his personal merits entitle him to; and the kind of skill which can make friends of these State bosses and bring them into a "pool" or working combination becomes valuable, if not essential, to a national party leader. In fact, the condition of things is not wholly unlike that of England in the middle of last century, when a great borough-monger like the Duke of Newcastle was a power in the country, who must be not only consulted and propitiated at every crisis, but even admitted to a ministry if it was to secure a parliamentary majority. When a crisis rouses the nation, the power of these organization-mongers or vote-owners vanishes, just as that of the English borough-owning magnate was checked on like occasions, because it is only when the people of a State are listless that their Boss is potent. Unable to oppose a real wish of the masses, he can use their vote only by professing obedience while guiding it in the direction of the men or the schemes he favours.

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[1] In agreeing that the national capital should be placed in the South in return for the support of two Southern men to his plan for the settlement of the public debt.

[2] See Chapters XXI. XXV. and XXVI. in Vol. I.

This remark suggests another. I have remarked that among statesmen of the first of the two types described there are always ability and integrity sufficient for carrying on the regular business of the country. Men with those still higher gifts which European nations look for in their prime ministers (though they do not always find them) have of late years been rare. The Americans admit the fact, but explain it by arguing that there has been no crisis needing those gifts. Whether this is true may be doubted. Men of constructive statesmanship were surely needed in the period after the Civil War: and it is possible that a higher statesmanship might have averted the war itself. However, I am giving the view the Americans take. When the hour comes, they say, it will bring the man. It brought Abraham Lincoln. When he was nominated by the famous convention of 1860 his name had been little heard of beyond his own State. But he rose at once to the level of the situation, and that not merely by virtue of strong clear sense, but by his patriotic steadfastness and noble simplicity of character. If this was luck, it was just the kind of luck which makes a nation hopeful of its future, and inclined to overlook the faults of the methods by which it finds its leaders.

CHAPTER LXXV

WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK OF IT

The European reader who has followed thus far the description I have attempted to give of the working of party politics, of the nominating machine, of the spoils system, of elections and their methods of venality in some legislative and municipal bodies, may have been struck by its dark lines. He sees in this new country evils which savour of Old World corruption, even of Old World despotism. He is reminded sometimes of England under Sir Robert Walpole, sometimes of Russia under the Czar Nicholas. Assuming, as a European is apt to do, that the working of political machinery fairly reflects the temper, ideas, and moral standard of the governing class, and knowing that America is governed by the whole people, he may form a low opinion of the people. Perhaps he leaps to the conclusion that they are corrupt. Perhaps he more cautiously infers that they are heedless. Perhaps he conceives that the better men despair of politics and wash their hands of it, while the mass of the people, besotted with a self-confidence born of their rapid material progress, are blind to the consequences which the degradation of public life must involve. All these views one may hear expressed by persons who have visited America, and of course more confidently by persons who have not. It is at any rate a plausible view that whatever public opinion there may be in America upon religion, or morality, or literature, there can be little public opinion about politics, and that the leading minds, which in all countries shape and direct opinion, have in America abdicated that function, and left the politicians to go their own way.

So far is this from being the truth that there is no country where public opinion is stronger or more active than in the United States, none where it has the field so completely to itself, because aristocracies like those of Europe do not exist, and because the legislative bodies are relatively less powerful and less independent. It may seem a paradox to add that public opinion is on the whole wholesome and upright. Nevertheless. this also is true.

Here we are brought face to face with the cardinal problem of American politics. Where political life is all-pervading, can practical politics be on a lower level than public opinion? How can a free people which tolerates gross evils be a pure people? To explain this is the hardest task which one who describes the United States sees confronting him. Experience has taught me, as it teaches every traveller who seeks to justify when he returns to Europe his faith in the American people, that it is impossible to get Englishmen at any rate to realize the co-existence of phenomena so unlike those of their own country, and to draw the inferences which those phenomena suggest to one who has seen them with his own eyes. Most English admirers of popular government, when pressed with the facts, deny them. But I have already admitted them.

To present a just picture of American public opinion one must cut deeper than the last few chapters have done, and try to explain the character and conditions of opinion itself beyond the Atlantic, the mental habits from which it springs, the organs through which it speaks. This is what I propose to do in the chapters which follow. Meanwhile it is well to complete the survey of the actualities of party politics by stating in a purely positive, or as the Germans say "objective," way, what the Americans think about the various features of their system portrayed in these last chapters, about the spoils system and the machine, about corruption and election frauds. I omit attempts at explanation; I seek only to sum up the bare facts of the case as they strike one who listens to conversation and reads the newspapers.

Corruption.—Most of it the people, by which I mean not the masses but all classes of the people, do not see. The proceedings of Congress excite less interest than those of legislative chambers do in France or England. Venality occurs chiefly in connection with private legislation, and even in Washington very little is known about this, the rather as committees deliberate with closed doors. Almost the only people who possess authentic information as to what goes on in the Capitol are railroad men, land speculators, and manufacturers who have had to lobby in connection with the tariff. The same remark applies, though less forcibly, to the venality of certain State legislatures. A farmer of Western New York may go through a long life without knowing how his representative behaves at Albany. Albany is not within his horizon.[1]

The people see little and they believe less. True, the party newspapers accuse their opponents of such offences, but the newspapers are always reviling somebody; and it is because the words are so strong that the tale has little meaning. For instance, in a recent presidential contest charges (as to whose truth I of course express no opinion) affecting the honour of one of the candidates were brought against him by journals supporting the other candidate, and evidence tendered in support of them. The immense majority of his supporters did not believe these charges. They read their own newspapers chiefly, which pooh-poohed the charges. They could not be at the trouble of sifting the evidence, against which their own newspapers offered counter arguments, so they quietly ignored them. I do not say that they disbelieved. Between belief and disbelief there is an intermediate state of mind.

The habit of hearing charges promiscuously bandied to and fro, but seldom probed to the bottom, makes men heedless. So does the fact that prosecutions frequently break down even where there can be little doubt as to the guilt of the accused. A general impression is produced that things are not as they should be, yet the line between honest men and dishonest men is not sharply drawn, because those who are probably honest are attacked, and those who are almost certainly dishonest escape punishment. The state of mind of the average citizen is a state rather of lassitude than of callousness. He comes to think that politicians have a morality of their own, and must be judged by it. It is not his morality; but because it is professional, he does not fear that it will infect other plain citizens like himself.

Some people shrug their shoulders and say that politicians have always been so. Others, especially among the cultivated classes, will tell you that they wash their hands of the whole affair. "It is only the politicians—what can you expect from the politicians?" But there are also many who are shocked, and who, as already observed, exert themselves through the press, and by agitating where they see an opportunity of catching the public ear, to purify politics. Leaving out the cynics on the one side, and the perfectionist reformers on the other, and looking at the bulk of ordinary citizens, the fair conclusion from the facts is that many do not realize the evil who ought to realize it and be alarmed, and that those who do realize it are not sufficiently alarmed. They take it too easily. Yet now and then when roused they will inflict severe penalties on the givers and receivers of bribes.[1]

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[1] This remark does not apply to the malversations of officials in cities like New York or Philadelphia. These nobody can help knowing.

Election Frauds. — As these are offences against popular government and injure the opposite party, they excite stronger, or at least more general disapproval than do acts of venality, from which only the public purse suffers. No one attempts to palliate them; but it is hard to prove, and therefore hard to punish or suppress them. Legislative remedies have been tried, and fresh ones are constantly being tried. If people are less indignant than they would be in England, it is because they are less surprised. The evil is, however, not widespread, chiefly occurring in large cities. There is one exception to the general condemnation of the practice. In the Southern States negro suffrage produced, during the few years of "carpet-bagging" and military government which followed the war, incredible mischief. When these States recovered full self-government, and the former "rebels" were readmitted to the suffrage, the upper class of the white population "took hold" again, and in order, as they expressed it, "to save civilization," resolved that come what might the negro and white Republican vote should not, by obtaining a majority in the State legislatures, be in a position to play these pranks further. The negroes were at first roughly handled or, to use the technical term, "bull-dosed," but as this excited anger at the North, it was found better to attain the desired result by manipulating the elections in various ways, "using no more fraud than was necessary in the premises," as the pleaders say. As the negroes are obviously unfit for the suffrage, these services to civilization have been leniently regarded even at the North, and are justified at the South by men quite above the suspicion of personal corruption.

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[1] A recent instance is afforded in the punishment of the New York aldermen who sold the right of laying a horse car line in Broadway. See also Chapter LXXXVIII. on the Philadelphia Gas Ring.

The Machine.—The perversion by Rings and Bosses of the nominating machinery of primaries and conventions excites a disgust whose strength is proportioned to the amount of fraud and trickery employed, which of course is not great when the "good citizens" make no counter exertions. The disgust is everywhere less than a European expects, for it is mingled with amusement. The Boss is a sort of joke, albeit an expensive joke. "After all," people say, "it is our own fault. If we all went to the primaries, or if we all voted an Independent ticket, we could make an end of the boss." There is an odd sort of fatalism in their view of democracy. If a thing exists in a free country, it has a right to exist, for it exists by the leave of the people, who may be deemed to acquiesce in what they do not extinguish.

The Spoils System.—As to favouritism in patronage and spoils, I have already explained why the average citizen tolerates both. He has been accustomed to think rotation in office a recognition of equality, and a check on the growth of that old bugbear, an "aristocracy of office-holders." He does not see how favouritism can be prevented, for competitive examinations have seemed pedantic. Usage has sanctioned a certain amount of jobbery, so you must not be too hard on a man who does no more than others have done before him.

The conduct, as well as the sentiment, of the people is so much better than the practice of politicians that it is hard to understand why the latter are judged so leniently. No ordinary citizen, much less a man of social standing and high education, would do in his private dealings what many politicians do with little fear of disgrace. The career of the latter is not destroyed, while the former would lose the respect of his neighbours, and probably his chances in the world. Europe presents no similar contrast between the tone of public and that of private life.

There is, however, one respect in which a comparison of the political morality of the United States with that of England does injustice to the former.

The English have two moralities for public life, the one conventional or ideal, the other actual. The conventional finds expression not merely in the pulpit, but also in the speeches of public men, in the articles in leading newspapers and magazines. Assuming the normal British statesman to be patriotic, disinterested, truthful, and magnanimous, it treats every fault as a dereliction from a well-settled standard of duty, a quite exceptional dereliction which disentitles the culprit to the confidence even of his own party, but does not affect the generally high tone of British political life. The actual morality, as one gathers it in the lobbies of the legislative chambers, or the smoking-rooms of political clubs, or committee-rooms at contested elections, is a different affair. It regards (or has till very lately regarded) the bribery of voters as an offence, only when detection has followed; it assumes that a minister will use his patronage to strengthen his party or himself; it smiles at election pledges as the gods smiled at lovers' vows; it defends the abuse of parliamentary rules; it tolerates equivocations and misleading statements proceeding from an official even when they have not the excuse of state necessity.

Perhaps this is only an instance of the tendency in all professions to develop a special code of rules less exacting than those of the community at large. As a profession holds some things to be wrong, because contrary to its etiquette, which are in themselves harmless, so it justifies other things in themselves blamable. In the mercantile world, agents play sad tricks on their principals in the matter of commissions, and their fellow merchants are astonished when the courts of law compel the ill-gotten gains to be disgorged. At the English universities, everybody who took a Master of Arts degree was, until lately, required to sign the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Hundreds of men signed who did not believe, and admitted that they did not believe, the dogmas of this formulary; but nobody in Oxford thought the worse of them for a solemn falsehood. We all know what latitude, as regards truth, a "scientific witness," honourable enough in his private life, permits himself in the witness box. Each profession indulges in deviations from the established rule of morals, but takes pains to conceal these deviations from the general public, and continues to talk about itself and its traditions with an air of unsullied virtue. What each profession does for itself most individual men do for themselves. They judge themselves by themselves, that is to say, by their surroundings and their own past acts, and thus erect in the inner forum of conscience a more lenient code for their own transgressions than that which they apply to others. We all know that a fault which a man has often committed seems to him slighter than one he has refrained from and sees others committing. Often he gets others to take the same view. "It is only his way," they say; "it is just like Roger." The same thing happens with nations. The particular forms in which faults like corruption, or falsehood, or unscrupulous partisanship have appeared in the recent political history of a nation shock its moral sense less than similar offences which have taken a different form in some other country.

Now England, while accustomed to judge her own statesmen, as well as her national behaviour generally, by the actual standard, and therefore to overlook many deflections from the ideal, always applies the conventional or absolute standard to other countries, and particularly to America, which has been subjected to that censorious scrutiny which the children of an emigrant brother receive on their return from aunts and uncles.

How then does America deal with herself?

She is so far lenient to her own defects as to judge them by her past practice; that is to say, she is less shocked by certain political vices, because these vices are familiar, than might have been expected from the generally high tone of her people. But so far from covering things up as the English do, professing a high standard, and applying it rigorously to other countries, but leniently to her own offspring, she gives an exceptionally free course to publicity of all kinds, and allows writers and speakers to paint the faults of her politicians in strong, not to say exaggerated, colours. Such excessive candour is not an unmixed gain. It removes the restraint which the maintenance of a conventional standard imposes. There is almost too little of make-believe about Americans in public writing, as well as in private talk, and their dislike to humbug, hypocrisy, and what they call English pharisaism, not only tends to laxity, but has made them wrong in the eyes of the Old World their real moral sensitiveness. Accustomed to see constant lip-service rendered to a virtue not intended to be practised, Europeans naturally assume that things are in the United States several shades darker than they are painted, and interpret frankness as cynicism. Were American politics judged by the actual and not the conventional standard of England, the contrast between the demerits of the politicians and the merits of the people would be less striking.

PART IV

PUBLIC OPINION

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE NATURE OF PUBLIC OPINION

In no country is public opinion so powerful as in the United States: in no country can it be so well studied. Before I proceed to describe how it works upon the government of the nation and the States, it may be proper to consider briefly how it is formed, and what is the nature of the influence which it everywhere exercises upon government.

What do we mean by public opinion? The difficulties which occur in discussing its action mostly arise from confounding opinion itself with the organs whence people try to gather it, and from using the term, sometimes to denote everybody's views,—that is, the aggregate of all that is thought and said on a subject,—sometimes merely the views of the majority, the particular type of thought and speech which prevails over other types.

The simplest form in which public opinion presents itself is when a sentiment spontaneously rises in the mind and flows from the lips of the average man upon his seeing or hearing something done or said. Homer presents this with his usual vivid directness in the line which frequently recurs in the *Iliad* when the effect produced by a speech or event is to be conveyed: "And thus any one was saying as he looked at his neighbour." This phrase describes what may be called the rudimentary stage of opinion. It is the prevalent impression of the moment. It is what any man (not every man) says, *i.e.* it is the natural and the general thought or wish which an occurrence evokes. But before opinion begins to tell upon government, it has to go through several other stages. These stages are various in different ages and countries. Let us try to note what they are in England or America at the present time, and how each stage grows out of the other.

A business man reads in his newspaper at breakfast the events of the preceding day. He reads that Prince Bismarck has announced a policy of protection for German industry, or that Mr. Henry George has been nominated for the mayoralty of New York. These statements arouse in his mind sentiments of approval or disapproval, which may be strong or weak according to his previous predilection for or against protection or Mr. Henry George, and of course according to his personal interest in the matter. They rouse also an expectation of certain consequences likely to follow. Neither the sentiment nor the expectation is based on processes of conscious reasoning—our business man has not time to reason at breakfast—they are merely impressions formed on the spur of the moment. He turns to the leading article in the newspaper, and his sentiments and expectations are confirmed or weakened according as he finds that they are or are not shared by the newspaper writer. He goes down to his office in the train, talks there to two or three acquaintances, and perceives that they agree or do not agree with his own still faint impressions. In his counting-house he finds his partner and a bundle of other newspapers which he glances at; their words further affect him, and thus by the end of the day his mind is beginning to settle down into a definite view, which approves or condemns Prince Bismarck's declaration or the nomination of Mr. George. Meanwhile a similar process has been going on in the minds of others, and particularly of the journalists, whose business it is to discover what people are thinking. The evening paper has collected the opinions of the morning papers, and is rather more positive in its forecast of results. Next morning the leading party journals have articles still more definite and positive in approval or condemnation and in prediction of consequences to follow; and the opinion of ordinary minds, which in most of such minds has been hitherto fluid and undetermined, has begun to crystallize into a solid mass. This is the second stage. Then debate and controversy begin. The men and the newspapers who approve Mr. George's nomination argue with those who do not; they find out who are friends and who opponents. The effect of controversy is to drive the partisans on either side from some of their arguments, which are shown to be weak; to confirm them in others, which they think strong; and to make them take up a definite position on one side. This is the third stage. The fourth is reached when action becomes necessary. When a citizen has to give a vote, he votes as a member of a party; his party prepossessions and party allegiance lay hold on him, and generally stifle any individual doubts or repulsions he may feel. Bringing men up to the polls is like passing a steam roller over stones newly laid on a road: the angularities are pressed down, and an appearance of smooth and even uniformity is given which did not exist before. When a man has voted, he is committed: he has thereafter an interest in backing the view which he has sought to make prevail. Moreover, opinion, which may have been manifold till the polling, is thereafter generally two-fold only. There is a view which has triumphed and a view which has been vanquished.

In examining the process by which opinion is formed, we cannot fail to note how small a part of the view which the average man entertains when he goes to vote is really of his own making. His original impression was faint and perhaps shapeless: its present definiteness and strength are mainly due to what he has heard and read. He has been told what to think, and why to think it. Arguments have been supplied to him from without, and controversy has imbedded them in his mind. Although he supposes his view to be his own, he holds it rather because his acquaintances, his newspapers, his party leaders all hold it. His acquaintances do the like. Each man believes and repeats certain phrases, because he thinks that everybody else on his own side believes them, and of what each believes only a small part is his own original impression, the far larger part being the result of the commingling and mutual action and reaction of the impressions of a multitude of individuals, in which the element of pure personal conviction, based on individual thinking, is but small.

Every one is of course predisposed to see things in some one particular light by his previous education, habits of mind, accepted dogmas, religious or social affinities, notions of his own personal interest. No event, no speech or article, ever falls upon a perfectly virgin soil: the reader or listener is always more or less biassed already. When some important event happens, which calls for the formation of a view, these pre-existing habits, dogmas, affinities, help to determine the impression which each man experiences, and so far are factors in the view he forms.

But they operate chiefly in determining the first impression, and they operate over many minds at once. They do not produce variety and independence: they are soon overlaid by the influences which each man derives from his fellows, from his leaders, from the press.

Orthodox democratic theory assumes that every citizen has, or ought to have, thought out for himself certain opinions, *i.e.* ought to have a definite view, defensible by arguments, of what the country needs, of what principles ought to be applied in governing it, of the men to whose hands the government ought to be entrusted. There are persons who talk, though certainly very few who act, as if they believed this theory, which may be compared to the theory of some ultra-Protestants that every good Christian has or ought to have, by the strength of his own reason, worked out for himself from the Bible a system of theology. But one need only try the experiment of talking to that representative of public opinion whom the Americans call "the man in the cars," to realize how uniform opinion is among all classes of people, how little there is of that individuality in the ideas of each individual which they would have if he had formed them for himself, how little solidity and substance there is in the political or social ideas of nineteen persons out of every twenty. These ideas, when examined, mostly resolve themselves into two or three prejudices and aversions, two or three prepossessions for a particular leader or section of a party, two or three phrases or catchwords suggesting or embodying arguments which the man who repeats them has not analysed. It is not that these nineteen-twentieths are incapable of appreciating good arguments, or are unwilling to receive them. On the contrary, and this is especially true of the working classes, an audience is usually pleased when solid arguments are addressed to it, and men read with most relish the articles or leaflets, supposing them to be smartly written, which contain the most carefully sifted facts and the most exact thought. But to the great mass of mankind in all places, public questions come in the third or fourth rank among the interests of life, and obtain less than a third or a fourth of the leisure available for thinking. It is therefore rather sentiment than thought[1] that the mass can contribute; and the soundness and elevation of their sentiment will have more to do with their taking their stand on the side of justice, honour, and peace, than any reasoning they can apply to the sifting of the multifarious facts thrown before them, and to the drawing of the legitimate inferences therefrom.

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[1] Of course the sentiment is grounded on some very simple processes of reasoning, and it might be more exact to say that their sentiment arises on few and broad

It may be suggested that this analysis, if true of the uneducated, is not true of the educated classes. It is less true of that small class which in Europe specially occupies itself with politics; which, whether it reasons well or ill, does no doubt reason. But it is substantially no less applicable to the commercial and professional classes than to the working classes; for in the former, as well as in the latter, one finds few persons who take the pains, or have the leisure, or indeed possess the knowledge, to enable them to form an independent judgment. The chief difference between the so-called upper (including the wealthy part of the commercial classes) and humbler strata of society is that the former are less influenced by sentiment and possibly more influenced by notions, often erroneous, of their own interest. Having something to lose, they are more apt to imagine dangers to their property or their class ascendency. Moving in a more artificial society, their sympathies are less readily excited, and they more frequently indulge the tendency to cynicism natural to those who lead a life full of unreality and conventionalisms.

The apparent paradox that where the humbler classes have differed in opinion from the higher, they have often been proved by the event to have been right and their so-called betters wrong (a fact sufficiently illustrated by the experience of many European countries during the last half-century [1]), may perhaps be explained

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considerations, the case presenting itself to them apart from those complications by which an instructed man is beset.

[1] It may be said that this has been so because the movements of the last half-century have been mostly movements in a democratic direction, breaking down the power and privilege which the upper classes previously enjoyed; that it was therefore natural that the humbler classes should join in them; and that no presumption is thereby raised in favour of the judgment of the less-educated classes when questions emerge which are not questions between privilege and equality. I admit the force of the observation, yet there are cases which it does not seem to meet. Although there was a respectable minority of the educated classes in England who sympathized with the national movement in Italy, there was a fa larger proportion of the working classes who did so. During the American Civil War the working class of England stood for the North, a majority of the so-called educated class for the South. And the abolitionist movement in America itself was stronger among the less-educated than in the best-educated classes. In the two former cases the love of freedom which the humbler classes had been led, by their position in their own country, to form may no doubt be thought to have

by considering that the historical and scientific data on which the solution of a difficult political problem depends are really just as little known to the wealthy as to the poor. Ordinary education, even the sort of education which is represented by a university degree, does not fit a man to handle these questions, and it sometimes fills him with a vain conceit of his own competence which closes his mind to argument and to the accumulating evidence of facts. Education ought, no doubt, to enlighten a man; but the educated classes, speaking generally, are the property-holding classes, and the possession of property does more to make a man timid than education does to make him hopeful. He is apt to underrate the power as well as the worth of sentiment; he overvalues the restraints which existing institutions impose, he has a faint appreciation of the curative power of freedom, and of the tendency which brings things right when men have been left to their own devices, and have learnt from failure how to attain success. In the less-educated man a certain simplicity and openness of mind go some way to compensate for the lack of knowledge. He is more apt to be influenced by the authority of leaders; but as, at least in England and America, he is generally shrewd enough to discern between a great man and a demagogue, this is more a gain than a loss.

While suggesting these as explanations of the paradox, I admit that it remains a paradox. But the paradox is not in the statement, but in the facts. Nearly all great political and social causes have made their way first among the middle or humbler classes. The original impulse which has set the cause in motion, the inspiring ideas that have drawn men to it, have no doubt come from lofty and piercing minds, and minds generally belonging to the cultivated class. But the principles and precepts these minds have delivered have waxed strong because the masses have received them gladly, while the wealthiest or so-called educated classes have frowned on or persecuted them. The most striking instance of all is to be found in the early history of Christianity.

The analysis, however, which I have sought to give of opinion applies only to the nineteen men out of twenty, and not to the

attracted them to the cause which seemed to be that of freedom or of human rights in another country: still it must be remembered that they had no personal interest in these foreign causes—their sympathy with freedom was unselfish. Indeed, in the case of the American Civil War the English work-people had some interest the other way.

twentieth. It applies to what may be called passive opinion—the opinion of those who have no special interest in politics, or concern with them beyond that of voting, of those who receive or propagate, but do not originate, views on public matters. Or, to put the same thing in different words, we have been considering how public opinion grows and spreads, as it were, spontaneously and naturally. But opinion does not merely grow; it is also made. There is not merely the passive class of persons; there is the active class, who occupy themselves primarily with public affairs, who aspire to create and lead opinion. The processes which these guides follow are too well known to need description. There are, however, one or two points which must be noted, in order to appreciate the reflex action of the passive upon the active class.

The man who tries to lead public opinion, be he statesman, journalist, or lecturer, finds in himself, when he has to form a judgment upon any current event, a larger measure of individual prepossession, and of what may be called political theory and doctrine, than belongs to the average citizen. His view is therefore likely to have more individuality, as well as more intellectual value. On the other hand, he has also a stronger motive than the average citizen for keeping in agreement with his friends and his party, because if he stands aloof and advocates a view of his own, he may lose his influence and his position. He has a past, and is prevented, by the fear of seeming inconsistent, from departing from what he has previously said. He has a future, and dreads to injure it by severing himself ever so little from his party. He is accordingly driven to make the same sort of compromise between his individual tendencies and the general tendency which the average citizen makes. But he makes it more consciously, realizing far more distinctly the difference between what he would think, say, and do, if left to himself, and what he says and does as a politician, who can be useful and prosperous only as a member of a body of persons acting together and professing to think alike.

Accordingly, though the largest part of the work of forming opinion is done by these men—whom I do not call professional politicians, because in Europe many of them are not solely occupied with politics, while in America the name of professionals must be reserved for another class,—we must not forget the reaction constantly exercised upon them by the passive majority.

Sometimes a leading statesman or journalist takes a line to which he finds that the mass of those who usually agree with him are not responsive. He perceives that they will not follow him, and that he must choose between isolation and a modification of his own views. A statesman may sometimes venture on the former course, and in very rare cases succeed in imposing his own will and judgment on his party. A journalist, however, is almost invariably obliged to hark back if he has inadvertently taken up a position disagreeable to his *clientèle*, because the proprietors of the paper have their circulation to consider. To avoid so disagreeable a choice a statesman or a journalist is usually on the alert to sound the general opinion before he commits himself on a new issue. He tries to feel the pulse of the mass of average citizens; and as the mass, on the other hand, look to him for initiative, this is a delicate process. In European countries it is generally the view of the leaders which prevails, but it is modified by the reception which the mass give it; it becomes accentuated in the points which they appreciate; while those parts of it, or those ways of stating it, which have failed to find popular favour, fall back into the shade.

This mutual action and reaction of the makers or leaders of opinion upon the mass, and of the mass upon them, is the most curious part of the whole process by which opinion is produced. It is also that part in which there is the greatest difference between one free country and another. In some countries the leaders count for, say, three-fourths of the product, and the mass for one-fourth only. In others we may find these proportions reversed. In some countries the mass of the voters are not only markedly inferior in education to the few who lead, but are more modest, more disposed to look up to their betters. In others the difference of intellectual level between those who busy themselves with politics and the average voter is far smaller. Perhaps the leader is not so well instructed a man as in the countries first referred to; perhaps the average voter is better instructed and more self-confident. Where both of these phenomena coincide, so that the difference of level is inconsiderable, public opinion will evidently be a different thing from what it is in countries where, though the Constitution has become democratic, the habits of the nation are still aristocratic. This is the difference between America and England.

CHAPTER LXXVII

GOVERNMENT BY PUBLIC OPINION

We talk of public opinion as a new force in the world, conspicuous only since governments began to be popular. Statesmen, even in the last generation, looked on it with some distrust or dislike. Sir Robert Peel, for instance, in a letter written in 1820, speaks with the air of a discoverer, of "that great compound of folly, weakness, prejudice, wrong feeling, right feeling, obstinacy, and newspaper paragraphs, which is called public opinion."

Yet opinion has really been the chief and ultimate power in nearly all nations at nearly all times. I do not mean merely the opinion of the class to which the rulers belong. Obviously the small oligarchy of Venice was influenced by the opinion of the Venetian nobility, as the absolute Czar is influenced now by the opinion of his court and his army. I mean the opinion, unspoken, unconscious, but not the less real and potent, of the masses of the people. Governments have always rested and, special cases apart, must rest, if not on the affection, then on the reverence or awe, if not on the active approval, then on the silent acquiescence of the numerical majority. It is only by rare exception that a monarch or an oligarchy has maintained authority against the will of the people. The despotisms of the East, although they usually began in conquest, did not stand by military force but by popular assent. So did the feudal kingdoms of mediæval Europe. So do the despotisms of the Sultan (so far, at least, as regards his Mussulman subjects), of the Shah, and of the Chinese Emperor at this moment. The cases to the contrary are chiefly those of military tyrannies, such as existed in many of the Greek cities of antiquity, and in some of the Italian cities of the Renaissance, and such as exist now in the so-called republics of Central and South America. That even the Roman Empire, that eldest child of war and conquest, did not rest on force but on the consent and good-will of its subjects is shown by the smallness of its standing armies, nearly the whole of which were employed against frontier enemies, because there was rarely any internal revolt or disturbance to be feared. Belief in authority, and the love of established order, are among the strongest forces in human nature, and therefore in politics. The first supports governments *de jure*, the latter governments *de facto*. They combine to support a government which is *de jure* as well as *de facto*. Where the subjects are displeased, their discontent may appear perhaps in the epigrams which tempered the despotism of Louis XV. in France, perhaps in the sympathy given to bandits like Robin Hood, perhaps in occasional insurrections like those of Constantinople under the Eastern Emperors. Of course, where there is no habit of combination to resist, discontent may remain for some time without this third means of expressing itself. But, even when the occupant of the throne is unpopular, the throne as an institution is in no danger so long as it can command the respect of the multitude and show itself equal to its duties.

In the earlier or simpler forms of political society public opinion is passive. It acquiesces in, rather than supports, the authority which exists, whatever its faults, because it knows of nothing better, because it sees no way to improvement, probably also because it is overawed by some kind of religious sanction. Human nature must have something to reverence, and the sovereign, because remote and potent and surrounded by pomp and splendour, seems to it mysterious and half divine. Worse administrations than those of Asiatic Turkey and Persia at this moment can hardly be imagined, yet the Mohammedan population show no signs of disaffection. The subjects of Darius and the subjects of Theebaw obeyed as a matter of course. They did not ask why they obeyed, for the habit of obedience was sufficient. They could, however, if disaffected, have at any moment overturned the throne, which had only, in both cases, an insignificant force of guards to protect it. During long ages the human mind did not ask itself—in many parts of the world does not even now ask itself—questions which seem to us the most obvious. Custom, as Pindar said, is king over all mortals and immortals, and custom prescribed obedience. When in any society opinion becomes self-conscious, when it begins to realize its force and question the rights of its rulers, that society is already progressing, and soon finds means of organizing resistance and compelling reform.

The difference therefore between despotically-governed and free countries does not consist in the fact that the latter are ruled by opinion and the former by force, for both are generally ruled by opinion. It consists rather in this, that in the former the people instinctively obey a power which they do not know to be really of their own creation, and to stand by their own permission; whereas in the latter the people feel their supremacy, and consciously treat their rulers as their agents, while the rulers obey a power which they admit to have made and to be able to unmake them—the popular will. In both cases force is seldom necessary, or is needed only against small groups, because the habit of obedience replaces it. Conflicts and revolutions belong to the intermediate stage, when the people are awakening to the sense that they are truly the supreme power in the state, but when the rulers have not yet become aware that their authority is merely delegated. When superstition and the habit of submission have vanished from the whilome subjects, when the rulers, recognizing that they are no more than agents for the citizens, have in turn formed the habit of obedience, public opinion has become the active and controlling director of a business in which it was before the sleeping and generally forgotten partner. But even when this stage has been reached, as has now happened in most civilized States, there are differences in the degree and mode in and by which public opinion asserts itself. In some countries the habit of obeying rulers and officials is so strong that the people, once they have chosen the legislature or executive head by whom the officials are appointed, allow these officials almost as wide a range of authority as in the old days of despotism. Such people have a profound respect for government as government, and a reluctance, due either to theory or to mere laziness, perhaps to both, to interfere with its action. They say, "That is a matter for the Administration; we have nothing to do with it;" and stand as much aside or submit as humbly as if the government did not spring from their own will. Perhaps they practically leave themselves, like the Germans, in the hands of a venerated monarch and a forceful minister, giving these rulers a free hand so long as their policy moves in accord with the general sentiment of the nation, and maintains its glory. Perhaps while frequently changing their ministries, they nevertheless yield to each ministry, and to its executive subordinates all over the country, an authority great while it lasts, and largely controlling the action of the individual citizen. This seems to be still true of France. There are other countries in which, though the sphere of government is strictly limited by law, and the private citizen is little inclined to bow before an official, the habit has been to check the ministry chiefly through the legislature, and to review the conduct of both ministry and legislature only at long intervals, when an election of the legislature takes place. This was the case in Britain down till a recent period.[1] Although the people ruled, they ruled not directly, but through the House of Commons, which they chose only once in five, six, or seven years, and which might, at any given moment, represent rather the past than the present will of the nation.

I make these observations for the sake of indicating another form which the rule of the people may assume. We have distinguished three stages in the evolution of opinion from its unconscious and passive into its conscious and active condition. In the first it acquiesces in the will of the ruler whom it has been accustomed to obey. In the second conflicts arise between the ruling person or class, backed by those who are still disposed to obedience, on the one hand, and the more independent or progressive spirits on the other; and these conflicts are decided by arms. In the third stage the whilome ruler has submitted, and disputes are referred to the sovereign multitude, whose will is expressed at certain intervals upon slips of paper deposited in boxes, and is carried out by the minister or legislature to whom the popular mandate is entrusted. A fourth stage would be reached if the will of the majority of the citizens were to become ascertainable at all times, and without the need of its passing through a body of representatives, possibly even without the need of voting machinery at all. In such a state of things the sway of public opinion would have become more complete, because more continuous, than it is in those European countries which, like France, Italy, and Britain, look chiefly to parliaments as exponents of national sentiment. The authority would seem to remain all the while in the mass of the citizens. Popular government would have been pushed so far as almost to dispense with, or at any rate to anticipate, the legal modes in which the majority speaks its will at the polling booths; and this informal but direct control of the multitude would dwarf, if it did not supersede, the importance of those formal but occasional deliverances made at the elections of representatives. To such a condition of things the phrase, "Rule of public opinion," might be most properly applied, for public opinion would not only reign but govern.

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[1] It is unnecessary for the present purpose, and would involve a long digression to inquire how far this is still the case in Britain.

The mechanical difficulties, as one may call them, of working such a method of government are obvious. How is the will of the majority to be ascertained except by counting votes? how, without the greatest inconvenience, can votes be frequently taken on all the chief questions that arise? No country has yet surmounted these inconveniences, though little Switzerland with its *Referendum* has faced and dealt with some of them. But what I desire to point out is that even where the machinery for weighing or measuring the popular will from week to week or month to month has not been, and is not likely to be, invented, there may nevertheless be a disposition on the part of the rulers, whether ministers or legislators, to act as if it existed; that is to say, to look incessantly for manifestations of current popular opinion, and to shape their course in accordance with their reading of those manifestations. Such a disposition will be accompanied by a constant oversight of public affairs by the mass of the citizens, and by a sense on their part that they are the true governors, and that their agents, executive and legislative, are rather servants than agents. Where this is the attitude of the people on the one hand and of the persons who do the actual work of governing on the other, it may fairly be said that there exists a kind of government materially, if not formally, different from the representative system as it presented itself to European thinkers and statesmen of the last generation. And it is to this kind of government that democratic nations seem to be tending.

The state of things here indicated will be illustrated by what I have to say in the following chapters regarding opinion in the United States. Meanwhile a few remarks may be hazarded on the rule of public opinion in general.

The excellence of popular government lies not so much in its wisdom—for it is as apt to err as other kinds of government—as in its strength. It has often been compared to a pyramid, the firmest based of all buildings.[1] Nobody can be blamed for obeying it. There is no appeal from its decisions. Once the principle that the will of the majority, honestly ascertained, must prevail, has soaked into the mind and formed the habits of a nation, that nation acquires not only stability, but immense effective force. It has no need to fear discussion and agitation. It can bend all its resources to the accomplishment of its collective ends. The friction that exists in countries where the laws or institutions handed down from former generations are incompatible with the feelings and wishes of the people has disappeared. A key has been found that will unlock every door.

On the other hand, such a government is exposed to two dangers. One, the smaller one, yet sometimes troublesome, is the difficulty of ascertaining the will of the majority. I do not mean the difficulty of getting all citizens to vote, because it must be taken that those who do not vote leave their will in the hands of those who do, but the difficulty of obtaining by any machinery yet devised a quite honest record of the results of voting. Where the issues are weighty, involving immense interests of individual men or groups of men, the danger of bribery, of force, and still more of fraud in taking and counting votes, is a serious one. When there is reason to think that ballots have been tampered with, the value of the system is gone; and men are remitted to the old methods of settling their differences.

The other danger is that minorities may not sufficiently assert themselves. Where a majority has erred, the only remedy against the prolongation or repetition of its error is in the continued protests and agitation of the minority, an agitation which ought to be peaceably conducted, carried on by voice and pen, but which must be vehement enough to rouse the people and deliver them from the consequences of their blunders. But the more complete the sway of majorities is, so much the less disposed is a minority to maintain the contest. It loses faith in its cause and in itself, and allows its voice to be silenced by the triumphant cries of its opponents. How are men to acquiesce promptly and loyally in the decision of a majority, and yet to go on arguing against it? how can they be at once submissive and aggressive? That conceit of his own goodness and greatness which intoxicates an absolute monarch besets a sovereign people also, and the slavishness with which his ministers approach an Oriental despot may reappear in the politicians of a Western democracy. The duty therefore of a patriotic statesman in a country where public opinion rules, would seem to be rather to resist and correct than to encourage the dominant sentiment. He will not be content with trying to form and mould and lead it, but he will confront it, lecture it, remind it that it is fallible, rouse it out of its self-complacency. Unfortunately, courage and independence are plants which a soil impregnated with the belief in the wisdom of numbers does not tend to produce: nor is there any art known to statesmen whereby their growth can be fostered.

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[1] This comparison is an old one: it is referred to by James Wilson in the Pennsylvania Convention of 1787.—Elliot's *Debates*, ii. 524.

Experience has, however, suggested plans for lessening the risks incident to the dominance of one particular set of opinions. One plan is for the people themselves to limit their powers, *i.e.* to surround their own action and the action of their agents with restrictions of time and method which compel delay. Another is for them so to parcel out functions among many agents that no single one chosen indiscreetly, or obeying his mandate over-zealously, can do much mischief, and that out of the multiplicity of agents differences of view may spring which will catch the attention of the citizens.

The temper and character of a people may supply more valuable safeguards. The country which has worked out for itself a truly free government must have done so in virtue of the vigorous individuality of its children. Such an individuality does not soon yield even to the pressure of democratic conditions. In a nation with a keen moral sense and a capacity for strong emotions, opinion based on a love of what is deemed just or good will resist the multitude when bent on evil: and if there be a great variety of social conditions, of modes of life, of religious beliefs, these will prove centres of resistance to a dominant tendency, like rocks standing up in a river, at which he whom the current sweeps downwards may clutch. Instances might be cited even from countries where the majority has had every source of strength at its command—physical force, tradition, the all but universal persuasions and prejudices of the lower as well as of the higher classes—in which small minorities have triumphed, first by startling and then by leavening and convincing the majority. This they have done in virtue of that intensity of belief which is oftenest found in a small sect or group, not because it is small, but because if its belief were not intense it would not venture to hold out at all against the adverse mass. The energy of each individual in the minority makes it in the long run a match for a majority huger but less instinct with vitality. In a free country more especially, ten men who care are worth a hundred who do not.

Such natural compensations as this occur in the physical as well as in the spiritual and moral world, and preserve both. But they are compensations on which the practical statesman cannot safely rely, for they are partial, they are uncertain, and they probably tend to diminish with the progress of democracy. The longer public opinion has ruled, the more absolute is the authority of the majority likely to become, the less likely are energetic minorities to arise, the more are politicians likely to occupy themselves, not in forming opinion, but in discovering and hastening to obey it.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

HOW PUBLIC OPINION RULES IN AMERICA

It was observed in last chapter that the phrase "government by public opinion" is most specifically applicable to a system wherein the will of the people acts directly and constantly upon its executive and legislative agents. A government may be both free and good without being subject to this continuous and immediate control. Still this is the goal toward which the extension of the suffrage, the more rapid diffusion of news, and the practice of self-government itself, necessarily lead free nations; and it may even be said that one of their chief problems is to devise means whereby the national will shall be most fully expressed, most quickly known, most unresistingly and cheerfully obeyed. Delays and jerks are avoided, friction and consequent waste of force are prevented, when the nation itself watches all the play of the machinery and guides its workmen by a glance. Towards this goal the Americans have marched with steady steps, unconsciously as well as consciously. No other people now stands so near it.

Of all the experiments which America has made, this is that which best deserves study, for her solution of the problem differs from all previous solutions, and she has shown more boldness in trusting public opinion, in recognizing and giving effect to it, than has yet been shown elsewhere. Towering over Presidents and State governors, over Congress and State legislatures, over conventions and the vast machinery of party, public opinion stands out, in the United States, as the great source of power, the master of servants who tremble before it.

For the sake of making clear what follows, I will venture to recapitulate what was said in an earlier chapter as to the three forms which government has taken in free countries. First came primary assemblies, such as those of the Greek republics of antiquity, or those of the early Teutonic tribes, which have survived in a few Swiss cantons. The whole people met, debated current questions, decided them by its votes, chose those who were to carry out its will. Such a system of direct popular government is possible only in small communities, and in this day of large States has become a matter rather of antiquarian curiosity than of practical moment.

In the second form, power belongs to representative bodies, Parliaments and Chambers. The people in their various local areas elect men, supposed to be their wisest or most influential, to deliberate for them, resolve for them, choose their executive servants for them. They give these representatives a tolerably free hand, leaving them in power for a considerable space of time, and allowing them to act unchecked, except in so far as custom, or possibly some fundamental law, limits their discretion. This is done in the faith that the Chamber will feel its responsibility and act for the best interests of the country, carrying out what it believes to be the wishes of the majority, unless it should be convinced that in some particular point it knows better than the majority what the interests of the country require. Such a system has long prevailed in England, and the English model has been widely imitated on the continent of Europe and in the British colonies.

The third is something between the other two. It may be regarded either as an attempt to apply the principle of primary assemblies to large countries, or as a modification of the representative system in the direction of direct popular sovereignty. There is still a legislature, but it is elected for so short a time and checked in so many ways that much of its power and dignity has departed. Supremacy is not with it, but with the people, who have fixed limits beyond which it cannot go, and who use it merely as a piece of machinery for carrying out their wishes and settling points of detail for them. The supremacy of their will is expressed in the existence of a Constitution placed above the legislature, although capable of alteration by a direct popular vote. The position of the representatives has been altered. They are conceived of, not as wise and strong men chosen to govern, but as delegates under specific orders to be renewed at short intervals.

This is the form established in the United States. Congress sits for two years only. It is strictly limited by the Constitution, which is a fundamental law placed out of its reach, and by the co-existence of the State governments, which the Constitution protects. It has (except by way of impeachment) no control over the Federal executive, which is directly named by and responsible to the people. So too the State legislatures sit for short periods, do not appoint the State executives, are hedged in by the prohibitions of the State constitutions. The people frequently legislate directly by enacting or altering a constitution. The principle of popular sovereignty could hardly be expressed more unmistakably. Allowing for the differences to which the vast size of the country gives rise, the mass of the citizens may be deemed as directly the supreme power in the United States as the Assembly was at Athens or Syracuse.[1] The only check on the mass is that which they have themselves imposed, and which the ancient democracies did not possess, the difficulty of changing a rigid constitution. And this difficulty is serious only as regards the Federal Constitution.

As this is the most developed form of popular government, so is it also the form which most naturally produces what I have called government by public opinion. Popular government may be said to exist wherever all power is lodged in and issues from the people. Government by public opinion exists where the wishes and views of the people prevail, even before they have been conveyed through the regular law-appointed organs, and without the need of their being so conveyed. As in a limited monarchy the king, however powerful, must act through certain officers and in a defined legal way, whereas in a despotism he may act just as he pleases, and his initial written on a scrap of paper is as sure of obedience as his full name signed to a parchment authenticated by the Great Seal or the counter-signature of a minister, so where the power of the people is absolute, legislators and administrators are quick to catch its wishes in whatever way they may be indicated, and do not care to wait for the methods which the law prescribes. This happens in America. Opinion rules more fully, more directly, than under the second of the systems described above.

A consideration of the nature of the State governments as of the National government will show that legal theory as well as popular self-confidence gives birth to this rule of opinion.

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[1] Rome is a somewhat peculiar case, because she left far more power to her non-representative Senate and to her magistrates than the Greek democracies did to their Senate or officials. See Chapter XXV. in Vol. I.

Supreme power resides in the whole mass of citizens. They have prescribed, in the strict terms of a legal document, the form of government. They alone have the right to change it, and that only in a particular way. They have committed only a part of their sovereignty to their executive and legislative agents, reserving the rest to themselves. Hence their will, or in other words, public opinion, is constantly felt by these agents to be, legally as well as practically, the controlling authority. In England, Parliament is the nation, not merely by a legal fiction, but because the nation looks to Parliament only, having neither reserved any authority to itself nor bestowed any elsewhere. In America, Congress is not the nation, and does not claim to be so.

The ordinary functions and business of government, the making of laws, the imposing of taxes, the interpretation of laws and their execution, the administration of justice, the conduct of foreign relations, are parcelled out among a number of bodies and persons whose powers are so carefully balanced and touch at so many points that there is a constant risk of conflicts, even of deadlocks. Some of the difficulties thence arising are dealt with by the Courts, as questions of the interpretation of the Constitution. But in many cases the intervention of the courts, which can act only in a suit between parties, comes too late to deal with the matter, which may be an urgent one; and in some cases there is nothing for the courts to decide, because each of the conflicting powers is within its legal right. The Senate, for instance, may refuse the measures which the House thinks necessary. The President may veto bills passed by both Houses, and the Houses may not have a two-thirds majority to pass them over his veto. Congress may urge the President to adopt a certain course of action, and the President may refuse. The President may propose a treaty to the Senate and the Senate may reject it. In such cases there is a stoppage of governmental action which may involve loss to the country.[1] The master, however, is at hand to settle the quarrels of his servants. If the question be a grave one, and the mind of the country clear upon it, public opinion throws its weight into one or other scale, and its weight is decisive. Should opinion be nearly balanced, it is no doubt difficult to ascertain, till the next election arrives, which of many discordant cries is really the prevailing voice. This difficulty must, in a large country, where frequent plebiscites are impossible, be endured, and it may be well, when the preponderance of opinion is not great, that serious decisions should not be quickly taken. The general truth remains that a system of government by checks and balances specially needs the presence of an arbiter to incline the scale in favour of one or other of the balanced authorities, and that public opinion must therefore be more frequently invoked and more constantly active in America than in other countries.

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[1] Theoretically, of course, a deadlock may arise between the two Houses of Parliament in England, but in practice one House almost always yields, and when it refuses, there is a speedy remedy in a general election, the result of which has of late years been always accepted by the House of Lords as conclusive.

Those who invented this machinery of checks and balances were anxious not so much to develop public opinion as to resist and build up breakwaters against it. No men were less revolutionary in spirit than the heroes of the American Revolution. They made a revolution in the name of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights: they were penetrated by a sense of the dangers incident to democracy. As an able American writer says, "the prevalent conception of popular opinion was that it was aggressive, revolutionary, unreasoning, passionate, futile, and a breeder of mob violence." We may presently inquire whether this conception has been verified. Meantime be it noted that the efforts made in 1787 to divide authority and, so to speak, force the current of the popular will into many small channels instead of permitting it to rush down one broad bed, have really tended to exalt public opinion above the regular legally-appointed organs of government. Each of these organs is too small to form opinion, too narrow to express it, too weak to give effect to it. It grows up not in Congress, not in State legislatures, not in those great conventions which frame platforms and choose candidates, but at large among the people. It is expressed in voices everywhere. It rules as a pervading and impalpable power, like the ether which, as physicists say, passes through all things. It binds all the parts of the complicated system together and gives them whatever unity of aim and action they possess.

There is also another reason why the opinion of the whole nation is a more important factor in the government of the United States than anywhere in Europe. In Europe there has always been a governing class, a set of persons whom birth, or wealth, or education has raised above their fellows, and to whom has been left the making of public opinion together with the conduct of administration and the occupancy of places in the legislature. The public opinion of Germany, Italy, France, and England has been substantially the opinion of the class which wears black coats and lives in good houses, though in the two latter countries it has begun of late years to be affected by the opinion of the classes socially lower. Although the members of the English Parliament are increasingly controlled by their constituents, still the influence which plays most steadily on them and permeates them is the opinion of a class or classes and not of the whole nation. The class to which the great majority of members of both Houses belong (*i.e.* the landowners and the persons occupied in professions and in the higher walks of commerce) is the class which chiefly forms and expresses what is called public opinion. Even in these days of vigilant and exacting constituencies one sees many members of the House of Commons the democratic robustness or provincial crudity of whose ideas melts like wax under the influence of fashionable dinner-parties and club smoking-rooms. It is a common complaint that it is hard for a member to "keep touch" with the opinion of the masses.

In the United States public opinion is the opinion of the whole nation, with little distinction of social classes. The politicians, including the members of Congress and of State legislatures, are, perhaps not (as Americans sometimes insinuate) below, yet certainly not above the average level of their constituents. They find no difficulty in keeping touch with outside opinion. Washington or Albany may corrupt them, but not in the way of modifying their political ideas. They do not aspire to the function of forming opinion. They are like the Eastern slave who says "I hear and obey." Nor is there any one class or set of men, or any one "social layer," which more than another originates ideas and builds up political doctrine for the mass. The opinion of the nation is the resultant of the views, not of a number of classes, but of a multitude of individuals, diverse, no doubt, from one another, but, for the purposes of politics far less diverse than if they were members of groups defined by social rank or by property.

The consequences are noteworthy. One is, that statesmen cannot, as in Europe, declare any sentiment which they find telling on their friends or their opponents in politics to be confined to the rich, or to those occupied with government, and to be opposed to the general sentiment of the people. In America you cannot appeal from the classes to the masses. What the employer thinks, his workmen think.[1] What the wholesale merchant feels, the retail storekeeper feels, and the poorer customers feel. Divisions of opinion are vertical and not horizontal. Obviously this makes opinion more easily ascertained, while increasing its force as a governing power, and gives the people, that is to say, all classes in the community, a clearer and stronger consciousness of being the rulers of their country than European peoples have. Every man knows that he is himself a part of the government, bound by duty as well as by self-interest to devote part of his time and thoughts to it. He may neglect this duty, but he admits it to be a duty. So the system of party organizations already described is built upon this theory; and as this system is more recent, and is the work of practical politicans, it is even better evidence of the general acceptance of the doctrine than are the provisions of Constitutions. Compare European countries, or compare the other states of the New World. In the so-called republics of Central and South America a small section of the inhabitants pursue politics, while the rest follow their ordinary avocations, indifferent to elections and pronunciamentos and revolutions. In Germany, and in the German and Slavonic parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, people think of the government as a great machine which will go on, whether they put their hand to or not, a few persons working it, and all the rest paying and looking on. The same thing is largely true of republican France, and of semi-republican Italy, where free government is still a novelty, and local self-government in its infancy. Even in England, though the fifty-six years that have passed over her since the great Reform Act have brought many new ideas with them, the ordinary voter is still far from feeling, as the American does, that the government is his own, and he individually responsible for its conduct.

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[1] Of course I do not include questions specially relating to labour, in which there may be a direct conflict of interests.

CHAPTER LXXIX

ORGANS OF PUBLIC OPINION

How does this vague fluctuating complex thing we call public opinion—omnipotent yet indeterminate, a sovereign to whose voice every one listens, yet whose words, because he speaks with as many tongues as the waves of a boisterous sea, it is so hard to catch—how does public opinion express itself in America? By what organs is it declared, and how, since these organs often contradict one another, can it be discovered which of them speak most truly for the mass? The more completely popular sovereignty prevails in a country, so much the more important is it that the organs of opinion should be adequate to its expression, prompt, full, and unmistakable in their utterances. And in such European countries as England and France, it is now felt that the most successful party leader is he who can best divine from these organs what the decision of the people will be when a direct appeal is made to them at an election.

I have already observed that in America public opinion rules more completely, because more constantly, than anywhere in Europe. That is to say, it is a power not merely choosing executive and legislative agents at certain intervals, but continuously watching and guiding those agents, who look to it, not merely for a vote of approval when the next general election arrives, but also for directions which they are eager to obey, so soon as they have learnt their meaning. The efficiency of the organs of opinion is therefore more essential to the government of the United States than even to England or France.

An organ of public opinion is, however, not merely the expression of views and tendencies already in existence, but a factor in further developing and moulding the judgment of the people. Opinion makes opinion. Men follow in the path which they see others treading: they hasten to adopt the view that seems likely to prevail. Hence every weighty voice, be it that of a speaker, or an association, or a public meeting, or a newspaper, is at once the disclosure of an existing force and a further force influencing others. This fact, while it multiplies the organs through which opinion is expressed, increases the difficulty of using them aright, because every voice seeks to represent itself as that of the greater, or at least of a growing number. The press, and particularly the newspaper press, is of course the chief organ of opinion. It is hard for a man to estimate its power even in his own country, and of its action in America I speak with diffidence, feeling how much more there is to be known than I know, and how difficult it is to state precisely the view, such as it is, which I have been led to form.

Newspapers are powerful in three ways—as narrators, as advocates, and as weathercocks. They report events, they advance arguments, they indicate by their attitude what those who conduct them and are interested in their circulation take to be the prevailing opinion of their readers. In the first of these regards the American press is the most active in the world. Nothing escapes it which can attract any class of readers. It does not even confine itself to events that have happened, but is apt to describe others which may possibly have happened, however slight the evidence for them: *pariter facta atque infecta canebat.* This habit, from which of course the best papers are exempt, affects its worth as a historic record and its influence with sober-minded people. But it is an almost inevitable result of the high pressure under which the newspaper business is carried on. The appetite for news, and for highly-spiced or "sensational" news, is enormous, and journalists working under keen competition and in unceasing haste are disposed to take their chance of the correctness of the information they receive.

Some harm there is, but probably more good. A story is told of an old judge who was asked what sort of a circuit he had had. "Well, much like other circuits," he answered. "There were a good many verdicts for the defendant that ought to have been for the plaintiff, and a good many verdicts for the plaintiff that ought to have been for the defendant. But, on the whole, justice was done." If the heedlessness of the press sometimes causes pain to the innocent, it does a great and necessary service in exposing evil-doers, many of whom would escape were it never to speak except upon sufficient evidence. It is a watch-dog whose noisy bark must be tolerated, even when the person who approaches has no bad intent. No doubt charges are so promiscuously and often so lightly made as to tell less than they would in a country where the law of libel was more frequently appealed to. But many abuses are unveiled, many more prevented by the fear of publicity.

Although the leading American newspapers contain far more non-political matter than those of Europe, they also contain, especially of course before any important election, more domestic political intelligence than any, except perhaps two or three, of the chief English journals. The public has the benefit of knowing everything it can wish, and perhaps more than it ought to wish, to know about every occurrence and every personality. The intelligence is not quite of the same kind as in England or France. There are fewer reports of speeches, because fewer speeches of an argumentative nature are made, but more of the schemes and doings of conventions and political cliques, as well as of the sayings of individuals.

As the advocates of political doctrines, newspapers are of course powerful, because they are universally read and often ably written. They are commonly accused of unfairness and vituperation, but I doubt if there is any marked difference in this respect between their behaviour and that of European papers at a time of excitement. Nor could I discover that their arguments were any more frequently than in Europe addressed to prejudices rather than to reason. What struck me was that in America a leading article carries less weight of itself, being discounted by the shrewd reader as the sort of thing which the paper must of course be expected to say, and is effective only when it takes hold of some fact (real or supposed), and hammers it into the public mind. This is what the unclean politician has to fear. Mere abuse he does not care for, but constant references to and comments on misdeeds of which he cannot clear himself tell in the long run against him.

Regarding the party press as a factor in the formation of opinion whether by argument or by authority, it is probably less powerful in America than in Europe, because its average public is shrewder, more independent, less readily impressed by the mysterious "we." I doubt if there be any paper by which any considerable number of people swear; and am sure that comparatively few quote their favourite newspaper as an oracle in the way many persons still do in England.

In the cities where one finds really strong papers, each is exposed to a severer competition than in Europe, for, except in country places, most people look at more than one newspaper. The late Mr. Horace Greeley, who for many years owned and edited the *New York Tribune*, is probably the only case of an editor who, by his decided views and marked individuality, joined to journalistic talent and great self-confidence, acquired such a personal influence over multitudes of readers as to make them watch for and follow his deliverances. He was to the later Whig party and the earlier Republican party much what Katkoff was in our own time to the National party in Russia, and of course had a far greater host of readers.

It is chiefly in its third capacity as an index and mirror of public opinion that the press is looked to. This is the function it chiefly aims at discharging; and public men feel that in showing deference to it they are propitiating, and inviting the commands of, public opinion itself. In worshipping the deity you learn to conciliate the priest. But as every possible view and tendency finds expression through some organ in the press, the problem is to discover which views have got popular strength behind them. Professed party journals are of little use, though one may sometimes discover from the way they advance an argument whether they think it will really tell on the opposite party, or use it only because it falls within their own programme. More may therefore be gleaned from the independent or semi-independent journals, whereof there are three classes: papers which, like two or three in the great cities, generally support one party, but are apt to fly off from it when they disapprove its conduct, or think the people will do so; papers which devote themselves mainly to news, though they may give editorial aid to one or other party, according to the particular issue involved, and papers not professedly or primarily political. Of this last class the most important members are the religious weeklies, to whose number and influence few parallels can be discovered in Europe. They are mostly either neutral or somewhat loosely attached to their party, usually the Republican party, because it began as the Free Soil party, and includes, in the North, the greater number of serious-minded people. It is only on great occasions, such as a presidential election, or when some question involving moral issues comes up, that they discuss current politics at length. When they do, great is their power, because they are deemed to be less "thirled" to a party or a leader, because they speak from a moral standpoint, and because they are read on Sunday, a time of leisure, when their seed is more likely to take root. The monthly magazines deal less with politics than do the three leading English monthlies, or the older English quarterlies, but their influence seems to grow with the increasing amount of excellent writing they contain.

During presidential contests much importance is attributed to the attitude of the leading papers of the great cities, for the revolt of any one from its party—as, for instance, the revolt of several Republican papers during the election of 1884—indicates discontent and danger. Newspapers take more notice of one another, both by quoting from friendly sheets and by attacking hostile ones, than is usual in England, so that any incident or witticism which can tell in a campaign is at once taken up and read in a day or two in every city from Detroit to New Orleans.

The Americans have invented an organ for catching, measuring, and indicating opinion, almost unknown in Europe, in their practice of citing the private deliverances of prominent men. Sometimes this is done by publishing a letter, addressed not to the newspaper but to a friend, who gives it the publicity for which it was designed. Sometimes it is announced how the prominent man is going to vote at the next election. One may often notice short paragraphs stating that Judge So-and-So, or Dr. Blank, an eminent clergyman, is going to "bolt" the Presidential or State ticket of his party; and perhaps the reasons assigned for his conduct follow. Of the same nature, but more elaborate, is the interview, in which the prominent man unbosoms himself to a reporter, giving his view of the political position in a manner less formal and obtrusive but not less effective than that of a letter to the editor such as Englishmen write. Sometimes, at the editor's suggestion, or of his own motion, a brisk reporter waits on the leading citizen and invites the expression of his views, which is rarely refused, though, of course, it may be given in a guarded and unsatisfying way. Sometimes the leading citizen himself, when he has a fact on which to comment, or a set of views to communicate, sends for the reporter, who is only too glad to attend. The plan has many conveniences, among which is the possibility of disavowing any particular phrase as one which has failed to convey the speaker's true meaning. All these devices serve to help the men of eminence to impress their ideas on the public, while they show that there is a part of the public which desires such guidance.

Taking the American press all in all, it seems to serve the expression, and subserve the formation, of public opinion more fully than does the press of any part of the European continent, and not less fully than that of England. Individual newspapers and journalists altogether may enjoy less power than is the case in some countries of the Old World; but if this be so, the cause is to be found, not in the inferior capacity of editors and writers, but in the superior independence of the reading public, who regard their paper differently from the English, while finding it no less necessary a part of the mechanism of free government. The American press may not be above the moral level of the average good citizen—in no country does one either expect or find it to be so—but it is above the level of the Machine politicians in the cities. In the war waged against these worthies the newspapers of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago have been one of the most effective battalions.

While believing that a complete picture of current opinion can be more easily gathered from American than from English journals, I do not mean to imply that they supply all a politician needs. Any one who has made it his business to feel the pulse of English opinion must be sensible that when he has been away from England for a few weeks, he is sure, no matter how diligently he peruses the leading English papers of all shades, to "lose touch" of the current sentiment of England in its actuality. The journals seem to convey to him what their writers wish to be believed, and not necessarily what the people are really thinking; and he feels more and more as weeks pass the need of an hour's talk with four or five discerning friends of different types of thought, from whom he will gather how current facts strike and move the minds of his countrymen. Every prudent man keeps a circle of such friends, by whom he can test and correct his own impressions better than by the almost official utterances of the party journals. So in America there is much to be learnt—even a stranger can perceive it—from conversation with judicious observers outside politics and typical representatives of political sections and social classes, which the most diligent study of the press will not give.

Letters on public questions from their constituents to members of Congress or of State legislatures seem to be less frequent than in England, where members of the House of Commons find them no contemptible indication of the topics that occupy the mind of the people.

Except during electoral campaigns, public meetings, and especially public political dinners, play a smaller part in the political life of the United States than in that of France or England. Meetings were, of course, more frequent during the struggle against slavery than they need be in these quieter times, yet the difference between European and American practice cannot be wholly due to the more stirring questions which have latterly roused Englishmen and Frenchmen. A meeting in America is usually held for some practical object, such as the selection of candidates or the creation of an organization, less often as a mere demonstration of opinion and means of instruction. When instruction is desired, the habit is to bring down a man of note to give a political lecture, paying him from $50 to $100, or perhaps even $125 (£10 to £20 or £25), nor is it thought unbecoming for senators and ex-senators to accept such fees. At the meetings during an election campaign, which are numerous enough, there is little argumentative speaking, for those who attend are assumed to be all members of one party, sound already, and needing nothing but an extra dose of enthusiasm. Members of Congress do not deliver such annual discourses to their constituents as it has become the fashion for members of the House of Commons to deliver in England; and have indeed altogether an easier time of it as regards speaking, though a far harder one as regards the getting of places for their constituents. American visitors to England seem surprised and even a little edified when they find how much meetings are made to do there in the way of eliciting and cultivating opinion among the electors. I have often heard them praise the English custom, and express the wish that it prevailed in their own country.

As the ceaseless desire of every public man is to know which way the people are going, and as the polls are the only sure index of opinion, every election, however small, is watched with close attention. Now elections are in the United States as plentiful as revolutions in Peru. The vote cast for each party in a city, or State legislature district, or congressional district, or

State, at the last previous election, is compared with that now cast, and inferences drawn as to what will happen at the next State or presidential election. Special interest attaches to the State pollings that immediately precede a presidential election, for they not only indicate the momentary temper of the particular voters but tell upon the country generally, affecting that large number who wish to be on the winning side. As happens in the similar case of what are called "by-elections" to the House of Commons in England, too much weight is generally attributed to these contests, which are sometimes, though less frequently than in England, decided by purely local causes. Such elections, however, give the people opportunities of expressing their displeasure at any recent misconduct chargeable to a party, and sometimes lead the party managers to repent in time and change their course before the graver struggle arrives.

Associations are created, extended, and worked in the United States more quickly and effectively than in any other country. In nothing does the executive talent of the people better shine than in the promptitude wherewith the idea of an organization for a common object is taken up, in the instinctive discipline that makes every one who joins in starting it fall into his place, in the practical, business-like turn which the discussions forthwith take. Thus in November 1884, the cattlemen of the farther West, finding difficulties in driving their herds from Texas to Wyoming and Montana, suddenly convoked a great convention in Chicago which presented a plan for the establishment of a broad route from South to North, and resolved on the steps proper for obtaining the necessary legislation. Here, however, we are concerned with associations only as organs for focussing and propagating opinion. The greater ones, such as the temperance and total abstinence societies, ramify over the country and constitute a species of political organization which figures in State and even in presidential contests. Nearly every "cause," philanthropic, economic, or social, has something of the kind. Local associations or committees are often formed in cities to combat the Machine politicians in the interests of municipal reform; while every important election calls into being a number of "campaign clubs," which work while the struggle lasts, and are then dissolved. For these money is soon forthcoming; it is more plentiful than in Europe, and subscribed more readily for political purposes.

Such associations have great importance in the development of opinion, for they rouse attention, excite discussion, formulate principles, submit plans, embolden and stimulate their members. produce that impression of a spreading movement which goes so far towards success with a sympathetic and sensitive people. *Possunt quia posse videntur* is doubly true in America as regards the spectators as well as the actors, because the appearance of strength gathers recruits as well as puts heart into the original combatants. Unexpected support gathers to every rising cause. If it be true that individuality is too weak in the country, strong and self-reliant statesmen or publicists too few, so much the greater is the value of this habit of forming associations, for it creates new centres of force and motion, and nourishes young causes and unpopular doctrines into self-confident aggressiveness. But in any case they are useful as indications of the tendencies at work and the forces behind these tendencies. By watching the attendance at the meetings, the language held, the amount of zeal displayed, a careful observer can discover what ideas are getting hold of the popular mind.

One significant difference between the formation and expression of opinion in the United States and in Europe remains to be noted. In England and Wales more than one-third of the population was in 1881 to be found in twenty-eight cities with a population exceeding 70,000 (total 9,310,933). In France opinion is mainly produced in and policy, except upon a few of the broadest issues, dictated by, the urban population, though its number falls much below that of the rural. In America the cities with a population exceeding 70,000 inhabitants were, in 1880, twenty-four in number, with an aggregate population of 6,553,880, that is, less than one-seventh of the total population. The number of persons to the square mile is 446 in England, only 17·29 in the United States, excluding Alaska. Hence those influences formative of opinion which city life produces, the presence of political leaders, the influence they personally diffuse, the striking out and testing of ideas in conversation, may tell somewhat less on the American than on the English people, crowded together in their little island, and would tell much less but for the stronger social instincts of the Americans and the more general habit of reading daily newspapers.

In endeavouring to gather the tendencies of popular opinion, the task of an American statesman is in some respects easier than that of his English compeer. As social distinctions count for less in America, the same tendencies are more generally and uniformly diffused through all classes, and it is not necessary to discount so many special points of difference which may affect the result. As social intercourse is easier, and there is less *gêne* between a person in the higher and one in the humbler ranks, a man can better pick up in conversation the sentiments of his poorer neighbours. Moreover, the number of persons who belong to neither party, or on whom party allegiance sits loosely, is relatively smaller than in England, so the unpredictable vote —the doubtful element which includes those called in England "arm-chair politicians"—does not so much disturb calculations. Nevertheless the task of discerning changes and predicting consequences is always a difficult one, in which the most skilful observers may err. The country is large, the din of voices is incessant, the parties are in many places nearly balanced. There are frequent small changes from which it would be rash to infer any real movement of opinion, even as he who comes down to the beach must watch many wavelets break in ripples on the sand before he can tell whether the tide be ebbing or flowing.

It may be asked how, if the organs of public opinion give so often an uncertain sound, public opinion can with truth be said not only to reign but to govern. The answer is that a sovereign is not the less a sovereign because his commands are sometimes misheard or misreported. In America every one listens for them. Those who manage the affairs of the country obey to the best of their hearing. They do not, as has been heretofore the case in Europe, act on their own view, and ask the people to ratify: they take the course which they believe the people at the moment desire. Leaders do not, as sometimes still happens in England, seek to force or anticipate opinion; or if they do, they suffer for the blunder by provoking a reaction. The people must not be hurried. A statesman is not expected to move ahead of them; he must rather seem to follow, though if he has the courage to tell the people that they are wrong, and refuse to be the instrument of their errors, he will be all the more respected. Those who fail because they mistake eddies and cross currents for the main stream of opinion, fail more often from some personal bias, or from vanity, or from hearkening to a clique of adherents, than from want of materials for observation. A man who can disengage himself from preconceptions, who is in genuine sympathy with his countrymen, and possesses the art of knowing where to look for typical manifestations of their sentiments, will find the organs through which opinion finds expression more adequate as well as more abundant in America than they are in any other country.

CHAPTER LXXX

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AS MOULDING PUBLIC OPINION

As the public opinion of a people is even more directly than its political institutions the reflection and expression of its character, it is convenient to begin the analysis of opinion in America by noting some of those general features of national character which give tone and colour to the people's thoughts and feelings on politics. There are, of course, varieties proper to different classes, and to different parts of the vast territory of the Union; but it is well to consider first such characteristics as belong to the nation as a whole, and afterwards to examine the various classes and districts of the country. And when I speak of the nation I mean the native Americans. What follows is not applicable to the recent immigrants from Europe, and, of course, even less applicable to the Southern negroes; though both these elements are potent by their votes.

The Americans are a good-natured people, kindly, helpful to one another, disposed to take a charitable view even of wrongdoers. Their anger sometimes flames up, but the fire is soon extinct. Nowhere is cruelty more abhorred. Even a mob lynching a horse thief in the West has consideration for the criminal, and will give him a good drink of whisky before he is strung up. Cruelty to slaves was rare while slavery lasted, the best proof of which is the quietness of the slaves during the war when all the men and many of the boys of the South were serving in the Confederate armies. As everybody knows, juries are more lenient to offences of all kinds but one, offences against women, than they are anywhere in Europe. The Southern "rebels" were soon forgiven; and though civil wars are proverbially bitter, there have been few struggles in which the combatants did so many little friendly acts for one another, few in which even the vanquished have so quickly buried their resentments. It is true that newspapers and public speakers say hard things of their opponents; but this is a part of the game, and is besides a way of relieving their feelings: the bark is sometimes the louder in order that a bite may not follow. Vindictiveness shown by a public man excites general disapproval, and the maxim of letting bygones be bygones is pushed so far that an offender's misdeeds are often forgotten when they ought to be remembered against him.

All the world knows that they are a humorous people. They are as conspicuously the purveyors of humour to the nineteenth century as the French were the purveyors of wit to the eighteenth. Nor is this sense of the ludicrous side of things confined to a few brilliant writers. It is diffused among the whole people; it colours their ordinary life, and gives to their talk that distinctively new flavour which a European palate enjoys. Their capacity for enjoying a joke against themselves was oddly illustrated at the outset of the Civil War, a time of stern excitement, by the merriment which arose over the hasty retreat of the Federal troops at the battle of Bull Run. When William M. Tweed was ruling and robbing New York, and had set on the bench men who were openly prostituting justice, the citizens found the situation so amusing that they almost forgot to be angry. Much of President Lincoln's popularity, and much also of the gift he showed for restoring confidence to the North at the darkest moments of the war, was due to the humorous way he used to turn things, conveying the impression of not being himself uneasy, even when he was most so.

That indulgent view of mankind which I have already mentioned, a view odd in a people whose ancestors were penetrated with the belief in original sin, is strengthened by this wish to get amusement out of everything. The want of seriousness which it produces may be more apparent than real. Yet it has its significance; for people become affected by the language they use, as we see men grow into cynics when they have acquired the habit of talking cynicism for the sake of effect.

They are a hopeful people. Whether or no they are right in calling themselves a new people, they certainly seem to feel in their veins the bounding pulse of youth. They see a long vista of years stretching out before them, in which they will have time enough to cure all their faults, to overcome all the obstacles that block their path. They look at their enormous territory with its still only half-explored sources of wealth, they reckon up the growth of their population and their products, they contrast the comfort and intelligence of their labouring classes with the condition of the masses in the Old World. They remember the dangers that so long threatened the Union from the slave power, and the rebellion it raised, and see peace and harmony now restored, the South more prosperous and contented than at any previous epoch, perfect good feeling between all sections of the country. It is natural for them to believe in their star. And this sanguine temper makes them tolerant of evils which they regard as transitory, removable as soon as time can be found to root them up.

They have unbounded faith in what they call the People and in a democratic system of government. The great states of the European continent are distracted by the contests of Republicans and Monarchists, and of rich and poor,—contests which go down to the foundations of government, and in France are further embittered by religious passions. Even in England the ancient Constitution is always under repair, and while many think it is being ruined by changes, others hold that still greater changes are needed to make it tolerable. No such questions trouble American minds, for nearly everybody believes, and everybody declares, that the frame of government is in its main lines so excellent that such reforms as seem called for need not touch those lines, but are required only to protect the Constitution from being perverted by the parties. Hence a further confidence that the people are sure to decide right in the long run, a confidence inevitable and essential in a government which refers every question to the arbitrament of numbers. There have, of course, been instances where the once insignificant minority proved to have been wiser than the majority of the moment. Such was eminently the case in the great slavery struggle. But here the minority prevailed by growing into a majority as events developed the real issues, so that this also has been deemed a ground for holding that all minorities which have right on their side will bring round their antagonists, and in the long run win by voting power. If you ask an intelligent citizen why he so holds, he will answer that truth and justice are sure to make their way into the minds and consciences of the majority. This is deemed an axiom, and the more readily so deemed, because truth is identified with common sense, the quality which the average citizen is most confidently proud of possessing.

This feeling shades off into another, externally like it, but at bottom distinct—the feeling not only that the majority, be it right or wrong, will and must prevail, but that its being the majority proves it to be right. This feeling appears in the guise sometimes of piety and sometimes of fatalism. Religious minds hold—you find the idea underlying many books and hear it in many pulpits—that Divine Providence has specially chosen and led the American people to work out a higher type of freedom and civilization than any other state has yet attained, and that this great work will surely be brought to a happy issue by the protecting hand which has so long guided it. Before others who are less sensitive to such impressions, the will of the people looms up like one of the irresistible forces of nature, which you must obey, and which you can turn and use only by obeying. In the famous words of Bacon, *non nisi parendo vincitur.*

The Americans are an educated people, compared with the whole mass of the population in any European country except Switzerland, parts of Germany, Norway, Iceland, and Scotland; that is to say, the average of knowledge is higher, the habit of reading and thinking more generally diffused, than in any other country. (I speak, of course, of the native Americans, excluding negroes and recent immigrants.) They know the constitution of their own country, they follow public affairs, they join in local government and learn from it how government must be carried on, and in particular how discussion must be conducted in meetings, and its results tested at elections. The Town meeting has been the most perfect school of self-government in any modern country. They exercise their minds on theological questions, debating points of Christian doctrine with no small acuteness.[1] Women in particular, though their chief reading is fiction and theology, pick up at the public schools and from the popular magazines far more miscellaneous information than the women of any European country possess, and this naturally tells on the intelligence of the men.

That the education of the masses is nevertheless a superficial education goes without saying. It is sufficient to enable them to think they know something about the great problems of politics: insufficient to show them how little they know. The public elementary school gives everybody the key to knowledge in making reading and writing familiar, but it has not time to teach him how to use the key, whose use is in fact, by the pressure of daily work, almost confined to the newspaper and the magazine. So we may say that if the political education of the average American voter be compared with that of the average voter in Europe, it stands high; but if it be compared with the functions which the theory of the American Government lays on him, which its spirit implies, which the methods of its party organization assume, its inadequacy is manifest. This observation, however, is not so much a reproach to the schools, which generally do what English schools omit—instruct the child in the principles of the Constitution—as a tribute to the height of the ideal which the American conception of popular rule sets up.

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[1] See for a curious, though it must be admitted, somewhat dismal account of these theological discussions among the ordinary citizens of a small Western community, the striking novel of Mr. E. W. Howe, *The Story of a Country Town.*

For the functions of the citizen are not, as has hitherto been the case in Europe, confined to the choosing of legislators, who are then left to settle issues of policy and select executive rulers. The American citizen is virtually one of the governors of the republic. Issues are decided and rulers selected by the direct popular vote. Elections are so frequent that to do his duty at them a citizen ought to be constantly watching public affairs with a full comprehension of the principles involved in them, and a judgment of the candidates derived from a criticism of their arguments as well as a recollection of their past careers. As has been said, the instruction received in the common schools and from the newspapers, and supposed to be developed by the practice of primaries and conventions, while it makes the voter deem himself capable of governing, does not completely fit him to weigh the real merits of statesmen, to discern the true grounds on which questions ought to be decided, to note the drift of events and discover the direction in which parties are being carried. He is like a sailor who knows the spars and ropes of the ship and is expert in working her, but is ignorant of geography and navigation; who can perceive that some of the officers are smart and others dull, but cannot judge which of them is qualified to use the sextant or will best keep his head during a hurricane.

They are a moral and well-conducted people. Setting aside the *colluvies gentium* which one finds in Western mining camps, and which popular literature has presented to Europeans as far larger than it really is, setting aside also the rabble of a few great cities and the negroes of the South, the average of temperance, chastity, truthfulness, and general probity is somewhat higher than in any of the great nations of Europe. The instincts of the native farmer or artisan are almost invariably kindly and charitable. He respects the law; he is deferential to women and indulgent to children; he attaches an almost excessive value to the possession of a genial manner and the observance of domestic duties.

They are also a religious people. It is not merely that they respect religion and its ministers, for that one might say of Russians or Sicilians, not merely that they are assiduous churchgoers and Sunday-school teachers, but that they have an intelligent interest in the form of faith they profess, are pious without superstition, and zealous without bigotry. The importance which they still, though less than formerly, attach to dogmatic propositions, does not prevent them from feeling the moral side of their theology. Christianity influences conduct, not indeed half as much as in theory it ought, but probably more than it does in any other modern country, and far more than it did in the so-called ages of faith.

Nor do their moral and religious impulses remain in the soft haze of self-complacent sentiment. The desire to expunge or cure the visible evils of the world is strong. Nowhere are so many philanthropic and reformatory agencies at work. Zeal outruns discretion, outruns the possibilities of the case, in not a few of the efforts made, as well by legislation as by voluntary action, to suppress vice, to prevent intemperance, to purify popular literature.

Religion apart, they are an unreverential people. I do not mean irreverent,—far from it; nor do I mean that they have not a great capacity for hero-worship, as they have many a time shown. I mean that they are little disposed, especially in public questions—political, economical, or social—to defer to the opinions of those who are wiser or better instructed than themselves. Everything tends to make the individual independent and self-reliant. He goes early into the world; he is left to make his way alone; he tries one occupation after another, if the first or second venture does not prosper; he gets to think that each man is his own best helper and adviser. Thus he is led, I will not say to form his own opinions, for even in America few are those who do that, but to fancy that he has formed them, and to feel little need of aid from others towards correcting them. There is, therefore, less disposition than in Europe to expect light and leading on public affairs from speakers or writers. Oratory is not directed towards instruction, but towards stimulation. Special knowledge, which commands deference in applied science or in finance, does not command it in politics, because that is not deemed a special subject, but one within the comprehension of every practical man. Politics is, to be sure, a profession, and so far might seem to need professional aptitudes. But the professional politician is not the man who has studied statesmanship, but the man who has practised the art of running conventions and winning elections.

Even that strong point of America, the completeness and highly popular character of local government, contributes to lower the standard of attainment expected in a public man, because the citizens judge of all politics by the politics they see first and know best—those of their township or city, and fancy that he who is fit to be selectman, or county commissioner, or alderman, is fit to sit in the great council of the nation. Like the shepherd in Virgil, they think the only difference between their town and Rome is in its size, and believe that what does for Lafayetteville will do well enough for Washington. Hence when a man of statesmanlike gifts appears, he has little encouragement to take a high and statesmanlike tone, for his words do not necessarily receive weight from his position. He fears to be instructive or hortatory, lest such an attitude should expose him to ridicule; and in America ridicule is a terrible power. Nothing escapes it. Few have the courage to face it. In the indulgence of it even this humane race can be unfeeling.

They are a busy people. I have already observed that the leisured class is relatively small, is in fact confined to a few Eastern cities. The citizen has little time to think about political problems. Engrossing all the working hours, his avocation leaves him only stray moments for this fundamental duty. It is true that he admits his responsibilities, considers himself a member of a party, takes some interest in current events. But although he would reject the idea that his thinking should be done for him, he has not leisure to do it for himself, and must practically lean upon and follow his party. It astonishes an

English visitor to find how small a part politics play in conversation among the wealthier classes and generally in the cities. During a tour of four months in America in the autumn of 1881, in which I had occasion to mingle with all sorts and conditions of men in all parts of the country, and particularly in the Eastern cities, I never once heard American politics discussed except when I or some other European brought the subject on the carpet. In a presidential year, and especially during the months of a presidential campaign, there is, of course, abundance of private talk, as well as of public speaking, but even then the issues raised are largely personal rather than political in the European sense. But at other times the visitor is apt to feel—more, I think, than he feels anywhere in Britain—that his host has been heavily pressed by his own business concerns during the day, and that when the hour of relaxation arrives he gladly turns to lighter and more agreeable topics than the state of the nation. This remark is less applicable to the dwellers in villages. There is plenty of political chat round the store at the cross roads, and though it is rather in the nature of gossip than of debate, it seems, along with the practice of local government, to sustain the interest of ordinary folk in public affairs.[1]

The want of serious and sustained thinking is not confined to politics. One feels it even more as regards economical and social questions. To it must be ascribed the vitality of certain prejudices and fallacies which could scarcely survive the continuous application of such vigorous minds as one finds among the Americans. Their quick perceptions serve them so well in business and in the ordinary affairs of private life that they do not feel the need for minute investigation and patient reflection on the underlying principles of things. They are apt to ignore difficulties, and when they can no longer ignore them, they will evade them rather than lay siege to them according to the rules of art. The sense that there is no time to spare haunts an American even when he might find the time, and would do best for himself by finding it.

Some one will say that an aversion to steady thinking belongs to the average man everywhere. Admitting this, I must repeat once more that we are now comparing the Americans not with average men in other countries, but with the ideal citizens of a democracy. We are trying them by the standard which the theory of their government assumes. In other countries statesmen or philosophers do, and are expected to do, the solid thinking for the bulk of the people. Here the people are expected to do it for themselves. To say that they do it imperfectly is not to deny them the credit of doing it better than a European philosopher might have predicted.

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[1] The European country where the common people talk most about politics is, I think, Greece. I remember, for instance, in crossing the channel which divides Cephalonia from Ithaca, to have heard the boatmen discuss a recent ministerial crisis at Athens during the whole voyage with the liveliest interest and apparently considerable knowledge.

They are a commercial people, whose point of view is primarily that of persons accustomed to reckon profit and loss. Their impulse is to apply a direct practical test to men and measures, to assume that the men who have got on fastest are the smartest men, and that a scheme which seems to pay well deserves to be supported. Abstract reasonings they dislike, subtle reasonings they suspect; they accept nothing as practical which is not plain, downright, apprehensible by an ordinary understanding. Although open-minded, so far as willingness to listen goes, they are hard to convince, because they have really made up their minds on most subjects, having adopted the prevailing notions of their locality or party as truths due to their own reflection.

It may seem a contradiction to remark that with this shrewdness and the sort of hardness it produces, they are nevertheless an impressionable people. Yet this is true. It is not their intellect, however, that is impressionable, but their imagination and emotions, which respond in unexpected ways to appeals made on behalf of a cause which seems to have about it something noble or pathetic. They are capable of an ideality surpassing that of Englishmen or Frenchmen.

They are an unsettled people. In no State of the Union is the bulk of the population so fixed in its residence as everywhere in Europe; in many it is almost nomadic. Nobody feels rooted to the soil. Here to-day and gone to-morrow, he cannot readily contract habits of trustful dependence on his neighbours.[1] Community of interest, or of belief in such a cause as temperance, or protection for native industry, unites him for a time with others similarly minded, but congenial spirits seldom live long enough together to form a school or type of local opinion which develops strength and becomes a proselytizing force. Perhaps this tends to prevent the growth of variety in opinion. When a man arises with some power of original thought in politics, he is feeble if isolated, and is depressed by his insignificance, whereas if he grows up in favourable soil with sympathetic minds around him, whom he can in prolonged intercourse permeate with his ideas, he learns to speak with confidence and soars on the wings of his disciples. Whether or no there be truth in this suggestion, one who considers the variety of conditions under which men live in America may find ground for surprise that there should be so few independent schools of opinion.

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[1] Forty years ago this was much less true of New England than it is to-day. There are districts in the South where the population is stagnant, but these are backward districts, not affecting the opinion of the country.

But even while an unsettled, they are nevertheless an associative, because a sympathetic people. Although the atoms are in constant motion, they have a strong attraction for one another. Each man catches his neighbour's sentiment more quickly and easily than happens with the English. That sort of reserve and isolation, that tendency rather to repel than to invite confidence, which foreigners attribute to the Englishman, though it belongs rather to the upper and middle class than to the nation generally, is, though not absent, yet less marked in America.[1] It seems to be one of the notes of difference between the two branches of the race. In the United States, since each man likes to feel that his ideas raise in other minds the same emotions as in his own, a sentiment or impulse is rapidly propagated and quickly conscious of its strength. Add to this the aptitude for organization which their history and institutions have educed, and one sees how the tendency to form and the talent to work combinations for a political or any other object has become one of the great features of the country. Hence, too, the immense strength of party. It rests not only on interest and habit and the sense of its value as a means of working the government, but also on the sympathetic element and instinct of combination ingrained in the national character.

They are a changeful people. Not fickle, for they are if anything too tenacious of ideas once adopted, too fast bound by party ties, too willing to pardon the errors of a cherished leader. But they have what chemists call low specific heat; they grow warm suddenly and cool as suddenly; they are liable to swift and vehement outbursts of feeling which rush like wildfire across the country, gaining glow like the wheel of a railway car, by the accelerated motion. The very similarity of ideas and equality of conditions which makes them hard to convince at first makes a conviction once implanted run its course the more triumphantly. They seem all to take flame at once, because what has told upon one, has told in the same way upon all the rest, and the obstructing and separating barriers which exist in Europe scarcely exist here. Nowhere is the saying so applicable that nothing succeeds like success. The native American or so-called Know-Nothing party had in two years from its foundation become a tremendous force, running, and seeming for a time likely to carry, its own presidential candidate. In three years more it was dead without hope of revival. Now and then, as for instance in the elections of 1874-75, there comes a rush of feeling so sudden and tremendous, that the name of Tidal Wave has been invented to describe it.

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[1] I do not mean that Americans are more apt to unbosom themselves to strangers, but that they have rather more adaptiveness than the English, and are less disposed to stand alone and care nothing for the opinion of others. It is worth noticing that Americans travelling abroad seem to get more easily into touch with the inhabitants of the country than the English do: nor have they the English habit of calling those inhabitants—Frenchmen, for instance, or Germans—"the natives."

After this it may seem a paradox to add that the Americans are a conservative people. Yet any one who observes the power of habit among them, the tenacity with which old institutions and usages, legal and theological formulas, have been clung to, will admit the fact. A love for what is old and established is in their English blood. Moreover, prosperity helps to make them conservative. They are satisfied with the world they live in, for they have found it a good world, in which they have grown rich and can sit under their own vine and fig tree, none making them afraid. They are proud of their history and of their Constitution, which has come out of the furnace of civil war with scarcely the smell of fire upon it. It is little to say that they do not seek change for the sake of change, because the nations that do this exist only in the fancy of alarmist philosophers. There are nations, however, whose impatience of existing evils, or whose proneness to be allured by visions of a brighter future, makes them under-estimate the risk of change, nations that will pull up the plant to see whether it has begun to strike root. This is not the way of the Americans. They are no doubt ready to listen to suggestions from any quarter. They do not consider that an institution is justified by its existence, but admit everything to be matter for criticism. Their keenly competitive spirit and pride in their own ingenuity have made them quicker than any other people to adopt and adapt inventions: telephones were in use in every little town over the West, while in the City of London men were just beginning to wonder whether they could be made to pay. I have remarked in an earlier chapter that the fondness for trying experiments has produced a good deal of hasty legislation, especially in the newer States, and that some of it has already been abandoned. But these admissions do not affect the main proposition. The Americans are at bottom a conservative people, in virtue both of the deep instincts of their race and of that practical shrewdness which recognises the value of permanence and solidity in institutions. They are conservative in their fundamental beliefs, in the structure of their governments, in their social and domestic usages. They are like a tree whose pendulous shoots quiver and rustle with the lightest breeze, while its roots enfold the rock with a grasp which storms cannot loosen.

CHAPTER LXXXI

CLASSES AS INFLUENCING OPINION

These are some of the characteristics of American opinion in general, and may, if I am right in the description given, be discovered in all classes of the native white population. They exist, however, in different measure in different classes, and the above account of them needs to be supplemented by some remarks on the habits and tendencies of each class. I do not, of course, propose to describe the present opinions of classes, for that would require an account of current political questions: my aim is merely to state such general class characters as go to affect the quality and vigour of opinion. Classes are in America by no means the same thing as in the greater nations of Europe. One must not, for political purposes, divide them as upper and lower, richer and poorer, but rather according to the occupations they respectively follow and the conditions of life that constitute their environment. Their specific characters, as a naturalist would say, are less marked even in typical individuals than would be the case in Europe, and are in many individuals scarcely recognizable. Nevertheless, the differences between one class and another are sufficient to produce distinctly traceable influences on the political opinion of the nation, and to colour the opinions, perhaps even to determine the political attitude, of the district where a particular class predominates.

I begin with the farmers, because they are, if not numerically the largest class, at least the class whose importance is most widely felt. As a rule they are owners of their land; and as a rule the farms are small, running from forty or fifty up to three hundred acres. In a few places, especially in the West, large landowners let farms to tenants, and in some parts of the South one finds big plantations cultivated by small tenants, often negroes. But far more frequently the owner tills the land and the tiller owns it. The proportion of hired labourers to farmers is therefore very much smaller than in England, partly because farms are usually of a size permitting the farmer and his family to do much of the work by themselves, partly because machinery is more extensively used, especially in the level regions of the West. The labourers, or, as they are called, the "hired men," do not, taking the country as a whole, form a social stratum distinct from the farmers, and there is so little distinction in education or rank between them that one may practically treat employer and employed as belonging to the same class.

The farmer is a keener and more enterprising man than in Europe, with more of that commercial character which one observes in Americans, far less anchored to a particular spot, and of course subject to no such influences of territorial magnates as prevail in England, Germany, or Italy. He is so far a business man as sometimes to speculate in grain or bacon. Yet he is not free from the usual defects of agriculturists. He is obstinate, tenacious of his habits, not readily accessible to argument. His way of life is plain and simple, and he prides himself on its simplicity, holding the class he belongs to to be the mainstay of the country, and regarding city-folk with a mixture of suspicion and jealousy, because he deems them as inferior to himself in virtue as they are superior in adroitness, and likely to outwit him. Sparing rather than stingy in his outlays, and living largely on the produce of his own fields, he has so little ready money that small sums appear large to him; and as he fails to see why everybody cannot thrive and be happy on $1500 (£300) a year, he thinks that figure a sufficient salary for a county or district official, and regulates his notions of payment for all other officials, judges included, by the same standard. To belong to a party, and support it by his vote, seems to him part of a citizen's duty, but his interests in national politics are secondary to those he feels in agriculturists' questions, particularly in the great war against monopolies and capitalists, which the power and in some cases the tyranny of the railroad companies has provoked in the West. Naturally a grumbler, as are his brethren everywhere, finding his isolated life dull, and often unable to follow the causes which depress the price of produce, he is the more easily persuaded that his grievances are due to the combinations of designing speculators. The agricultural newspaper to which he subscribes, is of course written up to his prejudices, and its adulation of the farming class confirms his belief that he who makes the wealth of the country is tricked out of his proper share in its prosperity. Thus he now and then makes desperate attempts to right himself by legislation, lending too ready an ear to politicians who promise him redress by measures possibly unjust and usually unwise. However, after all said and done, he is an honest, kindly sort of man, hospitable, religious, patriotic: the man whose hard work has made the West what it is. It is chiefly in the West that one must now look for the well-marked type I have tried to draw, yet not always in the newer West; for, in regions like northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Dakota, the farming population is mainly foreign — Scandinavian and German—while the native Americans occupy themselves with trading and railroad management. However, the Scandinavians and Germans acquire in a few years many of the characteristics of the native farmer, and usually follow the political lead given by the latter. In the early days of the Republic, the agriculturists were, especially in the middle and the newer parts of the Southern States, the backbone of the Democratic party, sturdy supporters of Jefferson, and afterwards of Andrew Jackson. When the opposition of North and South began to develop itself and population grew up beyond the Ohio, the pioneers from New England who settled in that country gave their allegiance to the Whig party; and in the famous "log cabin and hard cider" campaign, which carried the election of General Harrison as President, that worthy, taken as a type of the hardy backwoodsman, made the Western farmer for the first time a noble and poetical figure to the popular imagination. Nowadays he is less romantic, yet still one of the best elements in the country. He stood by the Union during the war, and gave his life freely for it. His vote now carries the Western, and especially the North-western States for the Republican party, which is to him still the party which saved the Union and protects the negro.

The shopkeepers and small manufacturers may be said to form a second class, though in the smaller towns, of the West especially, their interests are so closely interwoven with those of the cultivators, and their way of life so similar, that there is little special to remark about them. In the larger towns they are sharper and more alive to what is passing than the rural population, but their intellectual horizon is not much wider. A sort of natural selection carries the more ambitious and eager spirits into the towns, for the native American dislikes the monotony and isolation of a farm life with its slender prospect of wealth. To keep a store in a "corner lot" is the ambition of the keen-witted lad. The American shopkeeper, it need hardly be said, has not the obsequiousness of his European congener, and is far from fancying that retail trade has anything degrading about it. He is apt to take more part in local politics than the farmer, but less apt to become a member of a State legislature, because he can seldom leave his store as the farmer can at certain seasons leave his land. He reads more newspapers than the farmer does, and of course learns more from current talk. His education has been better, because city schools are superior to country ones. He is perhaps not so certain to go solid for his party. He has less ground of quarrel with the railroads, but if connected with a manufacturing industry, is of course more likely to be interested in tariff questions, or, in other words, to be a Protectionist. His occupation, however, seldom gives him any direct personal motive for supporting one party more than another, and he has less of that political timidity which Europeans take to be the note of the typical bourgeois than the retail dealer of France or England.

The working men, by which I mean those who toil with their hands for wages, form a less well-marked class than is the case in most parts of Europe, and have not so many sub-classes within their own body, though of course the distinction between skilled and unskilled labour makes itself felt, as it always must. They are, with the exception of many of the recent immigrants, fairly educated; they read the daily newspapers, and very likely a weekly religious journal and a monthly magazine; many of them, I think a majority, except in the greater cities, belong to a congregation in whose concerns they are generally interested. Many are total abstainers. Their wives have probably had a longer schooling and read more widely than they do themselves. In the smaller towns both in New England and the West, and even in some of the large cities, such as Philadelphia and Chicago, the better part of them own the houses they live in, wooden houses in the suburbs with a little verandah and a bit of garden, and thus feel themselves to have a stake in the country Their wives dress with so much taste that on Sunday, or when you meet them in the steam cars (*i.e* on a railway journey), you would take them for persons in easy circumstances. Until lately, strikes have been less frequent than in England, nor, in spite of the troubles of recent years, has there hitherto existed any general sense of hostility to employers. This is due partly to the better circumstances of the workmen, partly to the fact that the passage from the one class to the other is easy and frequent. Thus, notwithstanding the existence of a so-called Labour party, and the recent creation of a vast organization embracing all trades over the whole Union (the Knights of Labour), there has been less of collective class feeling and class action among workmen than in England,[1] and certainly much less than in France or Germany. Politicians have of late years begun to pose as the special friends of the working man. Although in a country where the popular vote is omnipotent there seems something absurd in assuming that the working man is weak and stands in need of special protection, the great power of capital, the growing disparities of fortune, and the fact that rich men bear less than their due share of taxation, have furnished a basis for labour agitation. While contributing as many recruits to the army of professional politicians as do the other classes, the wage-earning class is no more active in political work than they are and furnishes few candidates for State or Federal office. Till the recent rise of the Greenback or Labour party little demand was made for the representation of labour as labour either in Congress or in State legislatures. There are of course many members who have begun life as operatives, but, so far as I know, very few in Congress, though some in the legislatures of the Eastern States, whose special function or claim it is to be the advocates of their whilome class. Such progress as communistic or socialistic movements have made has been made among the German (including Polish and Bohemian) immigrants, with a much smaller contingent of Irish support, but it is not easy to say how great it is, for the educated classes had known and cared very little about it until the recent outbreak of Anarchist violence at Chicago turned all eyes upon a new source of peril to civilization. One question, however, which never fails to excite the

[1] An experienced American friend writes me: "Although immigrants from Great Britain are the best of all our immigrants, English workmen are more apt to stir up trouble with their employers than those of any other race. Employers say that they fear their English workmen, because they are generally suspicious, and disbelieve in the possibility of anything but hostility between men and masters."

workmen is the introduction of cheap foreign labour. In the Pacific States the feeling against the Chinese has not merely been the prime factor in Californian State politics, but has induced the Senate to ratify treaties and Congress to pass Acts forbidding their entry; and when a shoe manufacturer in Massachusetts some years ago brought a number of Chinese to replace his own men who had gone out on strike, they were threatened with molestation. One trade, however, the Chinese are permitted to follow, and have now almost monopolized, that of washermen—I cannot say, washerwomen. Even a small city rarely wants its Chinese laundry.

It will be gathered from what I have said that there is no want of intelligence or acuteness among the working people. For political purposes, and setting apart what are specifically called labour questions, there is really little difference between them and other classes. Their lights are as good as those of farmers or traders, their modes of thinking similar. They are, however, somewhat more excitable and more easily fascinated by a vigorous personality, as the success of General Benjamin F. Butler among the shoemakers of his Massachusetts district proved. A powerful speaker with a flow of humour and audacity will go farther with them than with the more commercially-minded shopkeeper, or the more stolid agriculturist, if indeed one can call any American stolid.

The ignorant masses of such great cities as New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, ought not to be reckoned with the working class, but answer better to what is called in England "the residuum." They are largely Irish and Germans, together with Poles and Russians, Bohemians, negroes, Frenchmen, Italians, and such native Americans as have fallen from their first estate into drink or penury. From the immigrants neither national patriotism nor a sense of civic duty can as yet be expected; the pity is that they have been allowed civic power. Political opinions they can hardly be said to possess, for they have not had time to learn to know the institutions of their new country. Yet there are three sentiments which guide them, besides adhesion to the party which snapped them up when they landed, or which manipulates them by leaders of their own race. One of these sentiments is religious sympathy. Such of them as are Roman Catholics are ready to stand by whichever party may obtain the favour, or be readiest to serve the interests, of their church.[1] Another is the protection of the liquor traffic. The German loves his beer, and deems a land where this most familiar of pleasures is unattainable no land of freedom, while the Irishman stands by a trade in which his countrymen are largely engaged. And, thirdly, the American-Irish have been largely swayed by hatred of England, which has made them desire to annoy her, and if possible to stir up a quarrel between her and the land of their adoption. The events of the last three years in England seem, so far as one can gather, to have lessened this feeling, on which, of course, unscrupulous politicians play.

It must not be supposed that the class I am describing is wholly composed of immigrants, nor that all of the city-dwelling immigrants belong to it, for there are many foreigners whose education and skill places them at once on a level with the native American workmen. Its importance in politics arises less from its number, which is perhaps not over two millions all told,[2] than from its cohesion. Being comparatively ignorant, and a part of it not yet absorbed into the American population, it is not moved by the ordinary political forces, nor amenable to the ordinary intellectual and moral influences, but "goes solid" as its leaders direct it, a fact which gives these leaders exceptional weight, and may enable them, when parties are nearly balanced, to dictate their terms to statesmen who loathe the necessity of submission. Nevertheless it is not so largely answerable for the faults of American politics as the stranger might be led by the language of many Americans to believe. There is a disposition in the United States to use the immigrants, and especially the Irish, much as the cat is used in the kitchen to account for broken plates and food which disappears. The cities have no doubt suffered from the immigrant vote. But New York was not an Eden before the Irish came; and would not become an Eden were they all to move on to San Francisco.

The capitalist class consists of large merchants, manufacturers, bankers, and railroad men, with a few great land speculators and directors of trading or carrying companies. How much capacity and energy, how much wealth and influence there is in this small class everybody knows. It includes the best executive ability of the country, and far more ability than is devoted to the public service of the state. Though such persons do not, and hardly could, hold aloof from politics—some of them are indeed zealous party men—their interest lies chiefly in using politics for their own purposes, and especially in resisting the attacks with which they are threatened, sometimes by the popular movement against monopolists and great corporations, sometimes by Free Traders anxious to get rid of the present high tariff which the manufacturers deem essential to the welfare of the country. One-half of the capitalists are occupied in preaching *laissez faire* as regards railroads, the other half in resisting it in railroad matters, in order to have their goods carried more cheaply, and in tariff matters in order to protect industries threatened with foreign competition. Yet they manage to hold well together. Their practical talent does not necessarily imply political insight, any more than moral elevation, nor have they generally the taste or leisure to think seriously about the needs of the state. In no country does one find so many men of eminent capacity for business, shrewd, forcible, and daring, who are so uninteresting, so intellectually barren, outside the sphere of their business knowledge.[1]

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[1] Those of the German immigrants who remain in the great cities instead of going West, seem to be mostly Catholics, at least in name; as are also the Poles and Czechs.

[2] The total foreign-born population of the United States, of both sexes, was 6,679,943 out of 50,155,783. Of the class I am here describing, a part is native American and another considerable part the American-born sons of recent immigrants.

But the wealthy have many ways of influencing opinion and the course of events. Some of them own, others find means of inspiring, newspapers. Presidents of great corporations have armies of officials under their orders, who cannot indeed be intimidated, for public opinion would resent that, yet may be suffered to know what their superior thinks and expects. Cities, districts of country, even States or Territories, have much to hope or fear from the management of a railway, and good reason to conciliate its president. Moreover, as the finance of the country is in the hands of these men and every trader is affected by financial changes, as they control enormous joint-stock enterprises whose shares are held and speculated in by hosts of private persons of all ranks, their policy and utterances are watched with anxious curiosity, and the line they take determines the conduct of thousands not directly connected with them. A word from several of the great financiers would go a long way with leading statesmen. They are for the most part a steadying influence in politics, being opposed to sudden changes which might disturb the money market or depress trade, and especially opposed to complications with foreign States. They are therefore *par excellence* the peace party in America, for though some might like to fish in troubled waters, the majority would have far more to lose than to gain.

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[1] Silas Lapham, in Mr. Howells's well-known novel, illustrates many, though not all, the features of the type.

There remains the group of classes loosely called professional men, of whom we may dismiss the physicians as neither bringing any distinctive element into politics, nor often taking an active interest therein, and the journalists, because they have been considered in treating of the organs of opinion, and the clergy as inhibited by public feeling from direct immixture in political strife. In the anti-slavery and Free Soil struggles, ministers of religion were prominent, as they are now in the temperance movement, and indeed will always be when a distinctly moral issue is placed before the country. But in ordinary times, and as regards most questions, they find it prudent to rest content with inculcating such sound principles as will elevate their hearers' views and lead them to vote for the best men. Some few, however, of exceptional zeal or unusually well-assured position do appear on political platforms, and, like the late Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, justify their courage by their success. The Roman Catholic prelates have great influence with their flocks, but are so sensible of the displeasure which its exercise would cause among the native Americans as to be guarded in public action.

The lawyers, who are both barristers and attorneys in one, there being no such distinction of the profession into two branches as exists in Britain and France, are of all classes that which has most to do with politics.[1] From their ranks comes a large part, probably a half, and apparently the better half, of the professional politicians. Those who do not make politics a business have usually something to do with it, and even those who have little to do with it enjoy opportunities of looking behind the scenes. The necessities of their practice oblige them to study the Federal Constitution and the Constitution of their own State, as well as to watch current legislation. It is therefore from the legal profession that most of the leading statesmen have been drawn, from the days of Patrick Henry, John Jay, and John Adams down to those of Abraham Lincoln and the presidential candidates of our own generation. Hence both in great cities and in small ones the lawyer is favourably placed for influencing opinion. If he be a man of parts, he is apt to be the centre of local opinion, as Lincoln was in Springfield, where he practised law and made his reputation.[1] When in some great community like New York or Boston a demonstration is organized, some distinguished advocate, such as Charles O'Conor was in New York, such as Rufus Choate was in Boston, is selected for the oration of the day, because he has the power of speech, and because everybody knows him. Thus the lawyers best deserve to be called the leading class, less powerful in proportion to their numbers than the capitalists, but more powerful as a whole, since more numerous and more locally active. Of course it is only on a very few professional questions that they act together as a class. Their function is to educate opinion from the technical side, and to put things in a telling way before the people. Whether the individual lawyer is or is not a better citizen than his neighbours, he is likely to be a shrewder one, knowing more about government and public business than most of them do, and able at least to perceive the mischiefs of bad legislation, which farmers or shopkeepers may faintly realize. Thus on the whole the influence of the profession makes for good, and though it is often the instrument by which harm is wrought, it is more often the means of revealing and defeating the tricks of politicians, and of keeping the wholesome principles of the Constitution before the eyes of the nation. Its action in political life may be compared with its function in judicial proceedings. Advocacy is at the service of the just and the unjust equally, and sometimes makes the worse appear the better cause, yet experience shows that the sifting of evidence and the arguing of points of law tend on the whole to make justice prevail.

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[1] An account of the American Bar will be found in a later chapter.

There remain the men of letters and artists, an extremely small class outside a few Eastern cities, and the teachers, especially those in colleges and universities. The influence of literary men is more felt through magazines than through books, for native authorship suffers terribly from the deluge of cheap English reprints. That of the teachers tells primarily on their pupils and indirectly on the circles to which those pupils belong, or in which they work when they have left college. One is amused by the bitterness—affected scorn trying to disguise real fear—with which "college professors" are denounced by the professional politicians as unpractical, visionary, pharisaical, "kid-gloved," "high-toned," "un-American," the fact being that a considerable impulse towards the improvement of party methods, towards civil service reform, and towards tariff reform, has come from the universities, and been felt in the increased political activity of the better educated youth. The new generation of lawyers, clergymen, and journalists, of teachers in the higher schools, and indeed of business men also, so far as they receive a university education, have been inspired by the universities, particularly of course by the older and more highly developed institutions of the Eastern States, with a more serious and earnest view of politics than has prevailed among the richer classes since the strain of the Civil War passed away. Their horizon has been enlarged, their patriotism tempered by a sense of national shortcomings, and quickened by a higher ideal of national well-being. The confidence that all other prosperity will accompany material prosperity, the belief that good instincts are enough to guide nations through practical difficulties—errors which led astray so many worthy people in the last generation, are being dispelled, and a juster view of the great problems of democratic government presented. The seats of learning and education are at present among the most potent forces making for progress and the formation of sound opinion in the United States, and they increase daily in the excellence of their teachers no less than in the number of their students.[1]

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[1] I have heard townsmen of the great President describe how the front of his house used to be a sort of gathering place on summer evenings where his racy talk helped to mould the opinion of the place.

Before quitting this part of the subject a few general observations are needed to supplement or sum up the results of the foregoing inquiry.

There is in the United States no such general opposition as in Europe of upper and lower classes, richer and poorer classes. There is no such jealousy or hostility as one finds in France between the bourgeoisie and the operatives. In many places class distinctions do exist for the purposes of social intercourse. But it is only in the larger cities that the line is sharply drawn between those who call themselves gentlemen and those others to whom, in talk among themselves, the former set would refuse this epithet.

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[1] Some account of the American universities and colleges will be found in a later chapter.

There is no one class or set of men whose special function it is to form and lead opinion. The politicians certainly do not. Public opinion leads them.

Still less is there any governing class. The class whence most office-holders come corresponds, as respects education and refinement, to what would be called the lower middle or "middle-middle" class in Europe. But office-holders are not governors.

Such class issues as now exist or have recently existed, seldom, or to a small extent, coincide with party issues. They are usually toyed with by both parties alike, or if such a question become strong enough to be made the basis of a new party, such a party will usually stand by itself apart from the two old and regular organizations.

In Europe, classes have become factors in politics either from interest or from passion. Legislation or administration may have pressed hardly on a class, and the class has sought to defend and emancipate itself. Or its feelings may have been wounded by past injury or insult, and it may seek occasions for revenge. In America neither cause for the action of any class as a class can be said to exist.[1] Hence classes are not prime factors in American politics or in the formation of political opinion. In the main, political questions proper hold the first place in a voter's mind, and questions affecting his class the second.[2]

The nation is not an aggregate of classes. They exist within it, but they do not make it up. You are not struck by their political significance as you would be in any European country. The people is one people, although it occupies a wider territory than any other nation, and is composed of elements from many quarters.

Even education makes less difference between various sections of the community than might be expected. One finds among the better instructed many of those prejudices and fallacies to which the European middle classes are supposed peculiarly liable. Among the less instructed of the native Americans, on the other hand, there is a comprehension of public affairs, a shrewdness of judgment, and a generally diffused interest in national welfare, exceeding that of the humbler classes in Europe.

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[1] Even those who would persuade the working men that legislation is unjust to them seldom complain of what it does, but rather of what it omits or does not prevent. Any statute which bore harshly on labouring men, such as some of the English statutes about trade-unions repealed in 1875, would in America be abolished forthwith. There is at present in some States an agitation, conducted by "Labour" leaders, to abolish the laws which forbid "picketing" in trade disputes, but the laws have so far been upheld by the general sense of the community.

[2] I have called attention to exceptions—*e.g.* tariff questions are foremost in the mind of Pennsylvanian manufacturers, Chinese questions in those of Californian working men, transportation questions, at particular moments, in those of farmers.

This is the strong point of the nation. This is what gives buoyancy to the vessel of the state, enabling her to carry with apparent ease the dead weight of ignorance which European emigration continues to throw upon her decks.

CHAPTER LXXXII

LOCAL TYPES OF OPINION—EAST, WEST, AND SOUTH

Both the general tendencies and the class tendencies in the development of public opinion which I have attempted to sketch, may be observed all over the vast area of the Union. Some, however, are more powerful in one region, others in another, while the local needs and feelings of each region tend to give a particular colour to its views and direction to its aims. One must therefore inquire into and endeavour to describe these local differences, so as, by duly allowing for them, to correct what has been stated generally with regard to the conditions under which opinion is formed, and the questions which evoke it.

In an earlier chapter I have classified the States into five groups, the North-Eastern or New England States, the Middle States, the North-Western States, the Southern States, and the States of the Pacific Slope. For the purposes of our present inquiry there is no material difference between the first two of these groups, but the differences between the others are significant. It is needless to add that there are, of course, abundance of local differences within these divisions. Pennsylvania, for instance, is for many purposes unlike Ohio. Georgia stands on a higher level than Louisiana. Nebraska is more raw than Illinois. To go into these minor points of divergence would involve a tedious discussion, and perhaps confuse the reader after all, so he must be asked to understand that this chapter endeavours to present only the general aspect which opinion wears in each section of the country, and that what is said of a section generally, is not meant to be taken as equally applicable to every State within it.

In the eastern States the predominant influence is that of capitalists, manufacturers, merchants—in a word, of the commercial classes. The East finds the capital for great undertakings all over the country, particularly for the making of railroads, the stock of which is chiefly held by Eastern investors, and the presidents whereof often have their central office in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, though the line may traverse the western or southern States. The East also conducts the gigantic trade with Europe. It ships the grain and the cattle, the pork and the petroleum, it "finances" the shipping of much of the cotton, it receives nearly all the manufactured goods that Europe sends, as well as the emigrants from Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia.[1] The arms of its great bankers and merchants stretch over the whole Union, making those commercial influences which rule in their own seat potent everywhere. Eastern opinion is therefore the most quickly and delicately sensitive to financial movements and to European influences, as well as the most firmly bound to a pacific policy. As in the beginning of the century, trade interests made Massachusetts and Connecticut anxious to avoid a breach with England, to whose ports their vessels plied, so now though the shipping which enters Eastern ports is chiefly European (English, Norwegian, German, French), the mercantile connections of American and European merchants and financiers are so close that an alarm of war might produce widespread disaster.

The East is also, being the oldest, the best educated and most intelligent quarter of the country.[2] Not only does it contain more men of high culture, but the average of knowledge and thought (excluding the mob of the great cities and some backward districts in the hills of Pennsylvania) is higher than elsewhere. Its literary men and eminent teachers labour for the whole country, and its cities, which show the lowest element of the population in their rabble, show also the largest number of men of light and leading in all professions. Although very able newspapers are published in the West as well as in the East, still the tone of Eastern political discussion is more generally dignified and serious than in the rest of the Union. The influences of Europe, which, of course, play first and chiefly upon the East, are, so far as they affect manners and morality, by no means an unmixed good. But in the realm of thought Europe and its criticism are a stimulative force, which corrects any undue appreciation of national virtues, and helps forward sound views in economics and history. The leisured and well-read class to be found in some Eastern cities is as cosmopolitan in tone as can be found anywhere in the world, yet has not lost the piquancy of its native soil. Its thought appropriates what is fresh and sound in the literature or scientific work of Germany, England, and France more readily than any of those countries seems to learn from each of the others. These causes, added to the fact that the perversions of party government have been unusually gross among the irresponsible masses that crowd these very cities, has roused a more strenuous opposition to the so-called "machine" than in other parts of the country. The Eastern voter is less bound to his party, more accustomed to think for himself, and to look for light, when he feels his own knowledge defective, to capable publicists. When, either in Federal or State or city politics, an independent party arises, repudiating the bad nominations of one or both of the regular organizations, it is here that it finds its leaders and the greatest part of its support. There is also in New England a good deal left of the spirit of Puritanism, cold and keen as glacier air, with its high standard of public duty and private honour, its disposition to apply the maxims of religion to the conduct of life, its sense, particularly needed in this tender-hearted country, that there are times when Agag must be hewn in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. If the people of New England, rural New York, and New Jersey had been left unpolluted by the turbid flood of foreign immigration, they would be the fittest of any in the world for a pure democratic government. Evils there would still be, as in all governments, but incomparably less grave than those which now tax the patriotism of the party which from these States holds up the banner of reform for the whole Union.

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[1] A few Germans go direct to New Orleans or the ports of Texas.

[2] The percentage of persons able to read and write is as high in some of the western States, such as Iowa and Nebraska, as in New England, but this may be because the Irish and French Canadians depress the level of New England.

It is impossible to draw a line between the East and the West, because the boundary is always moving westward. Thirty years ago Ohio was typically western in character, now it has as much in common with Connecticut or New York as with Kansas or Minnesota. The most distinctive elements in the western States are the farming class, which here attains its greatest strength, and the masses of newly-arrived Germans and Scandinavians, who fill whole districts, often outnumbering the native Americans. These immigrants contribute so much more largely to the voting than to the thinking power of the newer States, that their presence is one of the main reasons why the political power of the West exceeds its political capacity. They are honest, industrious, and worthy people, the parents of good American citizens, good men to clear the woods and break up the prairie, but they know so little of the institutions of the country, and often so little of its language, that they are as clay in the hands of their leaders, sometimes Americans, sometimes men of their own race. The predominance of the agricultural interest has the faults and merits indicated in the account already given of the farming class. Western opinion is politically unenlightened, and not anxious to be enlightened. It dislikes theory, and holds the practical man to be the man who, while discerning keenly his own interest, discerns nothing else beyond the end of his nose. It goes heartily into a party fight, despising Independents, Mugwumps, and "bolters" of all sorts. It has boundless confidence in the future of the country, of the West in particular, of its own State above all, caring not much for what the East thinks, and still less for the judgment of Europe. It feels sure everything will come right, and thinks "cheap transportation" to be the one thing needful. Reckless in enterprises, it is stingy in paying its officials, judges included: good-natured and indulgent to a fault, it is nevertheless displeased to hear that its senator lives in luxury at Washington. Its townsfolk are so much occupied in pushing their towns, between whose newspapers there is a furious rivalry—they hate one another as Athens hated Thebes, or Florence Pisa—its rich men in opening up railroads, its farmers in their household and field toils, labour being scarce and dear, that politics are left to the politicians, who, however, are not the worst specimens of their class. When election time comes the Western man shouts with all his lungs, and should ever another war break out, the West would again send down its stout-hearted, large-limbed regiments. While things are as they are now, you cannot get the average Western man to listen to philosophical reasonings, or trouble himself about coming dangers. To arrest him you must touch his sentiment, and at this moment the questions whose solution presses are questions which sentiment goes no way to solve.

The West may be called the most distinctively American part of America, because the points in which it differs from the East are the points in which America as a whole differs from Europe. But the character of its population differs in different regions, according to the parts of the country from which the early settlers came. Now the settlers have generally moved along parallels of latitude, and we have therefore the curious result that the characteristics of the older States have propagated themselves westward in parallel lines, so that he who travels from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains will find fewer differences to note than he who, starting from Texas, travels north to Manitoba. Thus northern Ohio was filled from New England and western New York, and in its turn colonized northern Illinois, Michigan, and much of the farther North-west. Southern Ohio and Illinois, together with great part of Indiana, were peopled from Virginia and Kentucky, and the somewhat inferior quality of these early settlers is still traceable. Missouri was colonized from the Slave States, and retains the taint to this day.[1] Kansas, however, though it lies west of Missouri, received in the days of the Free Soil struggle a good many Puritan immigrants from the Free States, and bears a somewhat higher stamp than its neighbour. The Scandinavians are chiefly in Wisconsin and Minnesota, the Germans numerous in Iowa also, and indeed all over these newer States, even in Texas. Milwaukee was in 1870 almost more of a German than an American city.[2] The Territories which lie still farther to the west have no vote in presidential elections, and only a voteless delegate each in Congress, yet over them the network of party organization has been spread, though, of course, the sparser population feeds a feebler political life.

The Pacific Slope, as its inhabitants call it, geographically includes the State of Oregon, but Oregon resembles the North-western States in so many respects that she may better be classed with them. California and Nevada on the other hand are distinctly peculiar. They are more Western than the States I have just been describing, with the characteristics of those States intensified and some new features added. They are cut off by deserts and barren mountain ranges from the agricultural part of the Mississippi basin, nor is population ever likely to become really continuous across this wilderness. Mining industries play a larger part in them than in any other State, except Colorado. Their inhabitants are unsettled and fluctuating, highly speculative, as one may expect those who mine and gamble in mining stocks to be, occupied with questions of their own, and comparatively indifferent to those which interest the rest of the country. Of these questions, one is Chinese immigration, another the management of the great Central and Southern Pacific railroad system, which is accused of oppressing the trade and industries of California; a third, the reconcilement of the claims of miners and agriculturists to the water of the rivers, which each set seeks to appropriate, and which the former claims the right to foul. But as the recent history of California deserves a chapter to itself, it is enough to observe that public opinion is here, in spite of the proverbial shrewdness, energy, and hardihood of the men of the Pacific, more fitful and gusty, less amenable to the voice of sober reason, and less deferential to the authority of statesmen, or even of party than anywhere else in the Union. "Interests," such as those of a great mine-owning group, or of a railroad, are immensely powerful, and the reactions against them not less so.

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[1] In Oregon there is a district which was settled by people from Kentucky and Tennessee, rather exceptionally, for the outflow of these States seldom moved so far to the north. The children of these immigrants are now less prosperous and enterprising than those of the men who came from the Free States.

[2] Asking my way about the streets, I found German more helpful than English. In the same year it was noticeable that in Wisconsin the paper money (then alone in use) had got a marked smell from the use of skins and furs by the newly-arrived Swedes and Norwegians.

Of the South, the solid South, whose presidential vote is now cast entirely for the Democrats, a fuller account must be given, because its condition is as singular as ever a free country found itself placed in. Equality before the law is absolute and perfect, being secured by the Federal Constitution. Yet the political subjection of nearly one half the population is no less complete.

There are three orders of men in the South.

The first is the upper or educated class, including the children of the planting aristocracy which ruled before the Civil War, together with the northern men who have since 1865 settled in the towns for the purposes of trade or manufacture. Of this order more than nine-tenths—those in fact who have survived from the old aristocracy (many of whose families perished), together with most of the newer arrivals—belong to the Democratic party. Most of the old families had belonged to it, because it was the pro-slavery party, and after the war it advocated the restoration of the so-called "rebels" to full political rights. Along with the high spirit and self-confidence which belong to a ruling race, these Southern democrats have an enlargement of view and an aptitude for grasping decided and continuous lines of policy, in fact a turn for statesmanship as contrasted with mere politics, which is less common in the North, because it is less favoured by the conditions under which ambition has in the North to push its way. The Southern man who enters public life has a more assured position than his rival from a northern State, because he represents the opinion of a united body who will stand by him, who regard him as their champion, and who expect from him less subservience to their instructions. He is less obliged to fear and court the breath of popular favour. He is not more educated or intelligent: he has certainly lived in a less stimulating atmosphere. But he has courage and a clear vision of his objects, the two gifts essential for a statesman; he feels a united popular impulse behind him which supplies a sort of second patriotism. Opinion in the Southern States before the war, in spite of the divisions between Democrats and Whigs, was generally bold, definite, and consistent, because based on few principles. It was the opinion of a small class who were largely occupied with public affairs. It has preserved this quality while losing its old fierceness and better recognizing the conditions under which it must work in a Federal republic.

I have heard keen American observers predict that those States will be the chief nursing ground of statesmen in the future, and will thus assert an ascendency which they cannot yet obtain by their votes, because population grows more slowly in the South than in Eastern cities or in Western prairies. The day will come when the South, or at least those large regions in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and Tennessee, where coal, iron, and copper abound, will be rich and populous; but before that day arrives, social and political conditions may have altered. At present the country is thinly settled, and so poor that a traveller finds it hard to understand how, when still poorer, it managed to resist for four years the armies of the wealthy and populous North. There is therefore less eagerness and hopefulness than in the West, less discussion and organization than in the East, much less of everything that is characteristically democratic and progressive. The Machine has been brought to no such perfection as in the Northern States, because the need of it is not felt where one party is sure of victory, and because social position and wealth sufficiently designate the men to be selected as candidates, or the men whose voice will decide the selection. Moreover, normal political life was in many regions suspended from 1861 till 1877, when the last of the Northern troops were withdrawn.

The second order consists of those who used to be called the Mean Whites. Their condition strengthens the impression of half civilization which the rural districts of the South produce upon the traveller, and which comes painfully home to him in the badness of the inns While slavery lasted, these whites were, in the planting States, a wholly wretched, because economically superfluous, class. There was no room for them as labourers, because the slaves did the work on the plantations; they had not the money to purchase land and machinery for themselves, nor the spirit to push their way in the towns, while the system of large slave-worked properties made, as the *latifundia* did long ago in Italy, the cultivation of small farms hopeless, and the existence of a thriving free peasantry impossible. The planters disliked these whites and kept them off their estates as much as possible; the slaves despised them, and called them "poor white trash." In South Carolina and the Gulf States, they picked up a wretched livelihood by raising some vegetables near their huts, and killing the wild creatures of the woods, while a few hung round the great houses to look out for a stray job. Shiftless, ignorant, improvident, with no aims in the present nor hopes for the future, citizens in nothing but the possession of votes, they were a standing reproach to the system that produced them, and the most convincing proof of its economic as well as moral failure. In the more northerly Slave States, and especially in the mountain districts of West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina, they were better off and far less degraded, because in these regions the slave population was much smaller. But they were and still are comparatively poor and uninstructed, in all respects behind the small farmers or artisans of the North. Since the war they have begun to advance, slowly indeed—for schools are still wanting, nor is it easy to provide them in a thinly peopled land of hills and forests—yet surely, for they have set themselves to raise cotton and other crops for the market; and the growth of mining and manufacturing industries, still in its infancy but destined to attain great dimensions, promises them work in the towns and a stimulus towards progress generally. Of public opinion among them, there is as yet little question, for they usually follow the lead of the upper class, not more out of deference to them than from aversion to the negroes.[1] The less a man has to be proud of, the more proud he will be of his colour.

The negroes form about one-third of the population of the old Slave States (6,100,000 out of 18,680,000 according to the census of 1880), and in three States, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, they are in a majority. It has been thought, but is by no means certain, that in the Gulf States they increase faster than the whites.[2] They are nowhere relapsing into barbarism, like those of Hayti, but in most places they enter civilization slowly. In Louisiana, for instance, some of them still practise Obeah rites and worship the serpent. Emancipation found them utterly ignorant; and the grant of the suffrage found them as unfit for political rights as any population could be. It was a desperate measure, from which worse results than those that have followed might have been expected. It may have been a necessary one, for the only other alternatives were to leave the negroes at the mercy of their former masters, or to support by northern bayonets what would have been practically oligarchic and hopelessly corrupt governments. At first the freedmen showed a passionate eagerness for education, but this has to some extent died away, the means of instruction provided being indeed unequal to the needs of the case. Several colleges or universities have been founded for their benefit,[3] besides an admirable school at Hampton in Virginia, where instruction in agriculture is given, as well as a good general education, and in all the States common schools have been established for the negroes distinct from those for white children. But while these schools are too few for the number of children of school age, and the money to establish more is not yet forthcoming, there are no means of getting the children to attend even such as exist, many parents being indifferent, and the children naturally still more so. Roughly speaking, 75 per cent of the adult coloured voters are unable to write, and most of the rest unaccustomed to read newspapers.

The dominant feeling of the negro was the fear at first of re-enslavement, and afterwards of oppression, at the hands of his former masters. There is so little hatred of the whites, and there were so few risings or detached outrages on the plantations during the Civil War, when the whole male white population was at the front and the mansions were inhabited by women and children only, that while allowing full credit to the negroes for their gentleness, one may acquit the old slave-owners, as a class, of cruelty. But though the negro does not hate the children of his former owner, and has often a sort of clannish attachment to them, though he is not now ill-treated and has little in the way of positive injustice or oppression to resent, he has felt himself still insecure, and has looked for protection to the party which liberated him, which enfranchised him, and which has ever since put forward the duty of defending him against a renewal of the Ku Klux outrages, or any legislative infringements on his civil equality. Hence the coloured people were for some years in steady and all but unanimous opposition to the Democratic party, which includes nearly the whole of the upper classes. While these classes, or rather those of them who had been concerned in the rebellion, were still under disfranchisement, the State legislatures were run by Republican politicians, mostly adventurers who had come down from the north to push their fortunes, and went by the name of "carpet-baggers." When this phase passed away, most of these adventurers slunk off, while those who remained, together with a small number of Southerners who had joined the Republican ranks, undertook to "run" the Republican party of the South. The negroes had at first scarce any leaders of their own race, the Methodist preachers being the only persons of prominence among them, but a few politicians were developed, and have since acted as subalterns to the white leaders. The men of property and intelligence, having now recovered their votes, lost no time in setting about to recover power. Considering themselves to have been ill-used by the Republicans, they were anxious to throw all the strength of their States to the Democratic side, and not less resolved to keep down the negroes, of whose pranks as legislators they had had painful experience in the first years after the war, when State debts were rolled up by millions, the State treasury plundered by carpet-baggers, and Acts of the legislature put up to public auction. To overcome the negro vote, then everywhere Republican, and in some districts in a clear majority, they were obliged to choose between force and fraud; and after some experiments in the former direction, they settled down to the latter alternative. Partly by fraud, partly by bribery, to which the negroes are accessible, partly by giving the coloured voters the impression that in one way or another they will not be suffered to carry Republican candidates, they have now managed to secure a complete control. Every Southern State,[1] except Tennessee and W. Virginia, gives Democratic majorities in Federal and State elections. Thus the opinion of the South is practically the opinion of the white aristocracy, the poor whites counting for little, and the negroes for less. Still both of these latter classes are advancing in intelligence and political knowledge. The chasm that used to divide the poor whites from the planters has been in many places bridged over by the growth of a middle class of small proprietors in the country and of manufacturing industries in the coal and iron regions, while the planter, where he survives, is less personally potent than he was before the war. The negroes, having found that they cannot resist the whites at the polls, and having perhaps learnt to distrust their carpet-bagger friends, are beginning to divide their votes between the two great parties, and are consequently better worth courting by the upper class, since no longer inaccessible to Democratic advances. When a question outside ordinary party politics comes up, as that of prohibiting the liquor traffic has lately done in Texas and Tennessee, in the shape of a proposed amendment to the State Constitution, the negro vote, though in Texas it is only about one-fifth of the whole, may be sufficient to turn the scale, and hence is fought for. A contest over such a question calling out incessant speaking at meetings and controversy in newspapers, is highly educative; the negro realizes his power, and votes according to his impulses. Those impulses are at present in favour of ardent spirits, so the Temperance party was defeated in Texas, to the serious hurt of the negro himself, who has less self-restraint than the whites. However, this is free government. The negro is growing into citizenhood, and the time may not be distant when he will begin to exert that reflex influence on the white oligarchy which enfranchised masses always tend to exert upon leaders, however superior in intelligence and energy the leaders may be. At present, however, for the purposes of State and national politics, he is not that free agent which the Constitution intends him to be. As a leading Southern poli-

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[1] This is less true in the hilly regions where there are few blacks.

[2] The census returns of 1870 were in the South imperfect.

[3] One which I saw at Atlanta, in Georgia, seemed full of promise.

[1] Delaware and Maryland are not thoroughly Southern States.

tician said to me in 1881, "We like the negro, and we treat him well. We mean to continue doing so. But we vote him."

Any one can imagine the irritation of northern Republican politicians who see the measure from which they expected such a reinforcement to the Republican party turned against them. The enfranchisement of the blacks, which was to have thrown some two millions of votes into the hands of the Republicans, has resulted in strengthening the Democratic party. The Republican leaders had hoped to carry some Southern States by the help of the negroes. But all the Southern States go Democratic in spite of the negroes, while the emancipation of the latter has raised the representation of these States in Congress and in presidential elections to a higher point than that at which it stood before the war, when only three-fifths of the slave population were reckoned for the purpose of allocating representatives. To know, moreover, that you are morally entitled to votes which force or fraud prevents you from getting, is enough to exasperate a saint. However, the Northern people, with their curious willingness to accept unwelcome results when they have given legal sanction to the cause whence those results flow, acquiesce in this subjection of the negro. They know that he does not suffer in person or estate, and if he is tricked out of his political privileges, well, it is only because he is not strong enough to protect himself. When he becomes strong enough, all will come right. To attempt to give him protection by Federal interference would involve evils far greater than the present.

Remembering that of the whole population of the Union, one-third is in the southern States, and that the majority of that one-third, viz. the lower part of the poor whites and the negroes (nearly one-fifth of the whole sixty millions), has no political knowledge or capacity, nothing that can be called rational opinion, it will be seen how far the inhabitants of the United States are from being a democracy enlightened through and through. If one part of the population is as educated and capable as that of Switzerland, another is as ignorant and politically untrained as that of Russia.

Of the four divisions of the country above described, the West (in which we may include Oregon) has already the largest vote, and since it grows faster than the others, will soon be indisputably sovereign. But as it grows, it loses some of its distinctive features, becoming more like the East, and falling more and more under Eastern influences, both intellectual and financial. One must not therefore suppose that what is now typically Western opinion will be the reigning opinion of the future. The Pacific States will in time be drawn closer to those of the Mississippi Valley, losing something of such distinctive quality as they still possess; and centres of literary activity, such as now exist almost exclusively in the Atlantic States, will be scattered over the whole country. Opinion will therefore be apparently more homogeneous, or at least less local, in the future than it has been in the past; even as now it is less determined by local and State influences than it was in the earlier days of the Republic.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

THE ACTION OF PUBLIC OPINION

THE last few chapters have attempted to explain what are the conditions under which opinion is formed in America, what national qualities it reflects, how it is affected by class interests or local circumstances, as well as through what organs it manifests itself. We must now inquire how it acts, and for this purpose try to answer three questions.

By whom is public opinion formed? *i.e.* by the few or by the many?

How does it seek to grasp and use the legal machinery which the Constitutions (Federal and State) provide?

What means has it of influencing the conduct of affairs otherwise than through the regular legal machinery?

It may serve to illustrate the phenomena which mark the growth of opinion in America if we compare them with those of some European country. As England is the country in which public opinion has been longest and with least interruption installed in power, and in which the mass of the people are more largely than elsewhere interested in public affairs,[1] England supplies the fittest materials for a comparison.

In England political supremacy belongs to the householder voters, who number (over the whole United Kingdom) about five and a half millions, being between one-half and two-thirds of the adult male population. Public opinion ought in theory to reside in them. Practically, however, as everybody knows, most of them have little that can be called political opinion. It is the creation and possession of a much smaller number.

An analysis of public opinion in England will distinguish three sets of persons—I do not call them classes, for they do not coincide with social grades—those who make opinion, those who receive and hold opinion, those who have no opinions at all.

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[1] Always excepting Switzerland and Norway, whose conditions are, however, too dissimilar from those of the United States to make a comparison profitable.

The first set consists of practical politicians (*i.e.* a certain number of members of the Lower House and a smaller fraction of members of the Upper, together with men taking an active part in local party organizations), journalists and other public writers, and a small fringe of other persons, chiefly professional men, who think and talk constantly about public affairs. Within this set of men, who are to be counted by hundreds rather than by thousands, it is the chiefs of the great parties who have the main share in starting opinion, the journalists in propagating it. Debates in Parliament do something, and the speeches which custom, recent, but strong and increasing, requires the leaders to deliver up and down the country, and which are of course reported, replace Parliament when it is not sitting. The function of the dozen best thinkers and talkers in each party is now not merely, as in the last generation, to know and manage Parliament, to watch foreign affairs, and prepare schemes of domestic legislation, but to inspire, instruct, stimulate, and attach the outside public. So too members of the Houses of Parliament find that the chief utility of their position lies in its enabling them to understand the actualities of politics better than they could otherwise do, and to gain a hearing outside for what they may have to say to their fellow-countrymen. This small set of persons constitutes what may be called the working staff of the laboratory; it is among them, by the reciprocal action and reaction on one another of the chiefs, the followers, and the press, that opinion receives its first shape.[1]

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[1] Small as it may still seem to an American, the class that forms public opinion has been steadily widening in England. Last century it consisted only of the then ruling class,—the great families,—the Houses of Parliament, a certain number of lawyers, with a very few journalists and clergymen, and a sort of fringe of educated men and monied men brought into relations with the rulers. This was the England which allowed George III. to alienate and lose the North American colonies. Even then, no doubt, the mass of voters outside (extremely small when compared with the numbers of to-day) counted for something, for there was always a possibility of their interfering when some feeling spread among them, one or other of the ruling parties being ready to stimulate and use such a feeling, and a general election enabling it in the counties and in a few of the boroughs to find expression. When the Reform Bill of 1832 enlarged the suffrage, and almost extinguished the pocket boroughs, what had been the ruling class sank into being merely the office-holding class; and now, though it dies hard, its monopoly of office is departing as its monopoly of sitting in Parliament did in 1832.

The second set of persons consists of those who watch public affairs with a certain measure of interest. When an important question arises, they look at the debates in Parliament or some platform deliverance by a leader, and they have at all times a notion of what is passing in the political world. They now and then attend a public meeting. They are not universally, but now pretty largely, enrolled as members of some political association. When an election arrives they go to vote of their own accord. They talk over politics after dinner or coming into town by a suburban train. The proportion of such persons is larger in the professional classes (and especially among the lawyers) than in the mercantile, larger in the upper mercantile than among the working men of the towns, larger among skilled than unskilled artisans, larger in the North than in the South, larger among the town workmen than among the newly enfranchised agricultural labourers. It varies in different parts of the country, and is perhaps relatively smaller in London than in other cities. If still less than a third of the total number of voters, it is nevertheless an increasing proportion.[1]

The third set includes all the rest of the voters. Though they possess political power, and are better pleased to have it, they do not really care about it—that is to say, politics occupy no appreciable space in their thoughts and interests. Some of them vote at elections because they consider themselves to belong to a party, or fancy that on a given occasion they have more to expect from the one party than from the other; or because they are brought up on election day by some one who can influence them. The number who vote tends to increase with the importation of party into municipal contests; and from the same cause some now enrol themselves in party associations. Others will not take the trouble to go to the polls. No one, except on the stump, can attribute independent political thinking to this mass of persons, because their knowledge and interest, though growing under the influence of the privileges they enjoy, are still slight. Many have not even political prepossessions, and will stare or smile when asked to which party they belong. They count for little except at elections, and then chiefly as instruments to be used by others. So far as the formation or exercise of opinion goes, they may be left out of sight.[1]

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[1] In Chapter LVII. *ante*, I have attempted to distinguish an Inner and Outer Circle of persons who take an active part in political work. What I here call the first or opinion-making set would lie almost wholly within the Inner Circle, and would be much smaller than it is.

It is obviously impossible to draw a sharp line between the second set and the third, or to estimate their relative numbers, because when politics are dull many persons subside into indifference whom the advent of a crisis may again arouse. And of course there are plenty of people in the second set who though interested in politics have no sort of real knowledge or judgment about them. Such remarks, however, do not touch the point of the present analysis, which is to distinguish between the citizens who originate opinion (the first set), those who hold and somewhat modify it (the second set), and those who are rather to be deemed, and then only when they come to the poll, mere ballot-markers. The first set do the thinking; they scatter forth the ideas and arguments. The second set receive and test what is set before them. What their feeling or judgment approves they accept and give effect to by their votes; what they dislike or suspect is refused and falls dead, or possibly sets them the other way. The measure of the worth of a view or proposal—I do not mean its intrinsic worth, but its power of pleasing the nation—is however not merely the breadth of the support it obtains, but also the zeal which it inspires in those who adopt it. Although persons in the second set usually belong to one or other party,[2] and are therefore *prima facie* disposed to accept whatever comes from their party leaders, yet the degree of cordiality with which they accept indicates to a leader how their minds are moving, and becomes an element in his future calculations. Thus the second set, although rather receptive than creative, has an important function in moulding opinion, and giving it the shape and colour it finally takes when it has crystallized under the influence of a party struggle. The third set can scarcely be called a factor in the formation of opinion, except in so far as one particular proposal or cry may sometimes prove more attractive to it than another. It has some few fixed ideas or prejudices which a statesman must bear in mind, but in the main it is passive, consisting of persons who either follow the lead of members of the first and second sets, or who are so indifferent as to refuse to move at all.

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[1] What is said here cannot of course be proved, but I believe will appear to be true to any one who, knowing a large constituency, will compare the number of persons who attend public meetings at an election and can be trusted to come of themselves to the polls with the total number of voters on the lists. In the London constituencies I doubt if more than 10 per cent of the nominal voting strength show their interest in either of these ways. From 30 to 45 per cent do not even vote. The voting proportion is much larger in the north and west midland towns and in Scotland. In the old days of small constituencies, when it might have been supposed that the restriction of the franchise would have made it more prized, inexperienced candidates were always struck by the small percentage, out of those whom they personally canvassed, who seemed to care about politics, or even deemed themselves steady party men.

[2] The increasingly party character of municipal contests tends to draw an always larger number of persons from the third class into the second, because being dragged up to vote at a municipal election they acquire, if not opinions, at least the habit of party action and of repeating party cries.

The United States present different phenomena. There what I have called the first set is extremely small. The third set is relatively smaller than in England, and but for the recent immigrants and the negroes would be insignificant. It is in the second set that opinion is formed as well as tested, created as well as moulded. Political light and heat do not radiate out from a centre as in England. They are diffused all through the atmosphere, and are little more intense in the inner sphere of practical politicians than elsewhere. The ordinary citizens are interested in politics, and watch them with intelligence, the same kind of intelligence (though a smaller quantity of it) as they apply to their own business. They are forced by incessant elections to take a more active part in public affairs than is taken by any European people. They think their own competence equal to that of their representatives and office-bearers; and they are not far wrong. They do not therefore look up to their statesmen for guidance, but look around to one another, carrying to its extreme the principle that in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.

In America, therefore, opinion is not made but grows. Of course it must begin somewhere; but it is often hard to say where or how. As there are in the country a vast number of minds similar in their knowledge, beliefs, and attitude, with few exceptionally powerful minds applying themselves to politics, it is natural that the same idea should often occur to several or many persons at the same time, that each event as it occurs should produce the same impression and evoke the same comments over a wide area. When everybody desires to agree with the majority, and values such accord more highly than the credit of originality, this tendency is all the stronger. An idea once launched, or a view on some current question propounded, flies everywhere on the wings of a press eager for novelties. Publicity is the easiest thing in the world to obtain; but as it is attainable by all notions, phrases, and projects, wise and foolish alike, the struggle for existence—that is to say, for public attention—is severe.

I do not, of course, deny that here, as everywhere else in the world, some one person or group must make a beginning, but seek to point out that, whereas in Europe it is patent who does make the beginning, in America a view often seems to arise spontaneously, and to be the work of many rather than of few. The individual counts for less, the mass counts for more. In propagating a doctrine not hitherto advocated by any party the methods used are similar to those of England. A central society is formed, branch societies spring up over the country, a journal (perhaps several journals) is started, and if the movement thrives, an annual convention of its supporters is held, at which speeches are made and resolutions adopted. If any striking personality is connected with the movement as a leader, as Garrison was with Abolitionism, he cannot but become a sort of figure-head. Yet it happens more rarely in America than in England that an individual leader gives its character to a movement, partly because new movements less often begin among, or are taken up by, persons already known as practical politicians.

As regards opinion on the main questions of the hour, such as the extension of slavery long was, and civil service reform, the currency, the tariff, are now, it rises and falls, much as in any other country, under the influence of events which seem to make for one or other of the contending views. There is this difference between America and Europe, that in the former speeches seem to influence the average citizen less, because he is more apt to do his own thinking; newspaper invective less, because he is used to it; current events rather more, because he is better informed of them. Party spirit is probably no stronger in America than in England, so far as a man's thinking and talking go, but it tells more upon him when he comes to vote.

An illustration of what has been said may be found in the fact that the proportion of persons who actually vote at an election to those whose names appear on the voting list is larger in America than in Europe. In many English constituencies this percentage does not exceed 60 per cent, though at exciting moments, such as the general elections of 1885 and 1886, it was larger than this, taking the country as a whole. In America 75-80 per cent may be a fair average, taking presidential elections, which call out the heaviest vote.[1] Something may be ascribed to the more elaborate local organization of American parties; but against this ought to be set the fact that the English voting mass includes not quite two-thirds, the American nearly the whole, of the adult male population, and that the English voters are the more solid and well-to-do part of the population.

Is there, then, in the United States, no inner sphere of thinkers, writers, and speakers, corresponding to what we have called the "first set" in England?

There are individual men corresponding to individuals in that English set, and probably quite as numerous. There are journalists of great ability, there are a few literary men, clergymen and teachers, a good many lawyers, some business men, some few politicians. But they are isolated and unorganized, and do not constitute a class. Most of them are primarily occupied with their own avocations, and have only spare time to give to political thinking or writing. They are nearly all resident in or near the Eastern cities, and through many large tracts of country scarce any are to be found. In England the profession of opinion-making and leading is the work of specialists; in America, except as regards the few journalists and statesmen aforesaid, of amateurs. As the books of amateurs have some merits which those of professional book writers are apt to want, so something is gained by the absence of the professional element from American political opinion. But that which these amateurs produce is less coherent, less abundant, and less promptly effective upon the mass of the citizens than the corresponding English product. In fact, the individual Americans whom we are considering can (except the journalists and statesmen aforesaid) be distinguished from the mass of citizens only by their superior intellectual competence and their keener interest in public affairs. We may therefore repeat the proposition, that in America opinion does not originate in a particular class, but grows up in the nation at large, though, of course, there are leading minds in the nation who have more to do with its formation than the run of their fellow-citizens. The best instance I know of the power such men may exercise is afforded by the success of the civil service reform movement, which began among a few enlightened citizens in the Eastern States, who by degrees leavened, or were thought to be leavening, the minds of their fellows to such an extent that the politicians were forced, sorely against the grain, to bring in and pass the appropriate legislation.

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[1] In 1880 nearly three-fourths of the then total male population of voting age voted.

We may now ask in what manner opinion, formed or forming, is able to influence the conduct of affairs?

The legal machinery through which the people are by the Constitution (Federal and State) invited to govern is that of elections. Occasionally, when the question of altering a State Constitution comes up, the citizen votes directly for or against a proposition put to him in the form of a constitutional amendment; but otherwise it is only by voting for a man as candidate that he can give expression to his views, and directly support or oppose some policy. Now, in every country voting for a man is an inadequate way of expressing one's views of policy, because the candidate is sure to differ in one or more questions from many of those who belong to the party. It is especially inadequate in the United States, because the strictness of party discipline leaves little freedom of individual thought or action to the member of a legislature, because the ordinary politician has little interest in anything but the regular party programme, and because, as has been pointed out in previous chapters, in no party are the citizens at large permitted to select their candidate, seeing that he is found for them and forced on them by the professionals of the party organization. While, therefore, nothing is easier than for opinion which runs in the direct channel of party to give effect to itself frequently and vigorously, nothing is harder than for opinion which wanders out of that channel to find a legal and regular means of bringing itself to bear upon those who govern either as legislators or executive officers. This is the weak point of the American party system, perhaps of every party system, from the point of view of the independent-minded citizen, as it is the strong point from that of the party manager. A body of unorganized opinion is therefore helpless in the face of compact parties. It is obliged to organize. When organized for the promotion of a particular view or proposition it has in the United States three courses open to it.

The first is to capture one or other of the great standing parties, *i.e.* to persuade or frighten that party into adopting this view as part of its programme, or, to use the technical term, making it a plank of the platform, in which case the party candidates will be bound to support it. This is the most effective course, but the most difficult; for a party is sure to have something to lose as well as to gain by embracing a new dogma. Why should such parties, as those of America have lately been, trouble themselves with taking up new questions, unless they are satisfied they will gain thereby? Their old dogmas are indeed worn threadbare, but have been hitherto found sufficient to cover them.

The second course is for the men who hold the particular view to declare themselves a new party, put forward their own programme, run their own candidates. Besides being costly and troublesome, this course would be thought ridiculous where the view or proposition is not one of first-rate importance, which has already obtained wide support. Where however it is applicable, it is worth taking, even when the candidates cannot be carried, for it serves as an advertisement, and it alarms the old party from which it withdraws voting strength in the persons of the dissidents.

The third is to cast the voting weight of the organized promoters of the doctrine or view in question into the scale of whichever party shows the greatest friendliness, or seems most open to conversion. As in many States the regular parties are pretty equally balanced, even a comparatively weak body of opinion may decide the result. Such a body does not necessarily forward its own view, for the candidates whom its vote carries are nowise pledged to its programme.[1] But it has made itself felt, shown itself a power to be reckoned with, improved its chances of capturing one or other of the regular parties, or of running candidates of its own on some future occasion. When this transfer of the solid vote of a body of agitators is the result of a bargain with the old party which gets the vote, it is called "selling out"; and in such cases it sometimes happens that the bargain secures one or two offices for the incoming allies in consideration of the strength they have brought. But if the new group be honestly thinking of its doctrines and not of the offices, the terms it will ask will be the nomination of good candidates, or a more friendly attitude towards the new view.

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[1] The practice of interrogating candidates with a view to obtain pledges from them to vote in a particular sense is less used in America than in England. The rigour of party discipline, and the fact that business is divided between the Federal and the State legislatures may have something to do with this difference. However, American candidates are sometimes pressed during election meetings by questions and demands from groups advocating moral reforms, such as liquor prohibition.

These are the ways in which either the minority of a party, holding some doctrine outside the regular party programme, or a new group aspiring to be a party, may assert itself at elections. The third is applicable wherever the discipline of the section which has arisen within a party is so good that its members can be trusted to break away from their former affiliation, and vote solid for the side their leaders have agreed to favour. It is a potent weapon, and liable to be abused. But in a country where the tide runs against minorities and small groups it is most necessary. The possibility of its employment acts as a check on the regular parties, disposing them to abstain from legislation which might irritate any body of growing opinion and tend to crystallize it as a new organization, and making them more tolerant of minor divergences from the dogmas of the orthodox programme than their fierce love of party uniformity would otherwise permit.

So far we have been considering the case of persons advocating some specific opinion or scheme. As respects the ordinary conduct of business by officials and legislators, the fear of popular displeasure to manifest itself at the next elections is, of course, the most powerful of restraining influences. Under a system of balanced authorities, such fear helps to prevent or remove deadlocks as well as the abuse of power by any one authority. A President (or State governor) who has vetoed bills passed by Congress (or his State legislature) is emboldened to go on doing so when he finds public opinion on his side; and Congress (or the State legislature) will hesitate, though the requisite majority may be forthcoming, to pass these bills over the veto. A majority in the House of Representatives, or in a State legislative body, which has abused the power of closing debate by the "previous question" rule, may be frightened by expressions of popular disapproval from repeating the offence. When the two branches of a legislature differ, and a valuable bill has failed, or when there has been vexatious filibustering, public opinion fixes the blame on the party primarily responsible for the loss of good measures or public time, and may punish it at the next election. Thus, in many ways and on many occasions, though not so often or so fully as is needed, the vision of the polls, seen some months or even years off, has power to terrify and warn selfish politicians. As the worth of courts of law is to be estimated not merely by the offences they punish and the causes they try, but even more by the offences from which the fear of penalties deters bad men, and by the payment which the prospect of a writ extracts from reluctant debtors, so a healthy and watchful public opinion makes itself felt in preventing foolish or corrupt legislation and executive jobbery. Mischief is checked in America more frequently than anywhere else by the fear of exposure, or by newspaper criticisms on the first stage of a bad scheme. And, of course, the frequency of elections—in most respects a disadvantage to the country—has the merit of bringing the prospect of punishment nearer.

It will be asked how the fear is brought home, seeing that the result of a coming election must usually be uncertain. Sometimes it is not brought home. The erring majority in a legislature may believe they have the people with them, or the Governor may think his jobs will be forgotten. Generally, however, there are indications of the probable set of opinion in the language held by moderate men and the less partisan newspapers. When some of the organs of the party which is in fault begin to blame it, danger is in the air, for the other party is sure to use the opening thus given to it. And hence, of course, the control of criticism is most effective where parties are nearly balanced. Opinion seems to tell with special force when the question is between a legislative body passing bills or ordinances, and a president, or governor, or mayor, vetoing them, the legislature recoiling whenever they think the magistrate has got the people behind him. Even small fluctuations in a vote produce a great impression on the minds of politicians.

The constancy or mutability of electoral bodies is a difficult phenomenon to explain, especially where secret voting prevails, and a dangerous one to generalize on. The tendency of the electoral vote in any constituency to shift from Tory to Whig or Whig to Tory, used in England to be deemed to indicate the presence of a corrupt element. It was a black mark against a borough. In America it sometimes deserves the same interpretation, for there are corruptible masses in some districts. But there are also cases in which it points to the existence of an exceptionally thoughtful and unprejudiced element in the population, an element which judges for itself, rejecting party dictation, and desires to cast its vote for the best man. The average American voter is more likely to be a partisan than the English, and is, I think, less capricious, and therefore if a transfer of votes from one party to the other does not arise from some corrupt influence, it betokens serious disapproval on the part of the Bolters. In the United States fluctuations are most frequent in one or two of the least sober and steady Western States, and in some of the most enlightened, such as New York and Massachusetts. In the former the people may be carried away by a sudden impulse; in the latter there is a section which judges candidates more by personal merits than by party professions.

These defects which may be noted in the constitutional mechanism for enabling public opinion to rule promptly and smoothly, are, in a measure, covered by the expertness of Americans in using all kinds of voluntary and private agencies for the diffusion and expression of opinion. Where the object is to promote some particular cause, associations are formed and federated to one another, funds are collected, the press is set to work, lectures are delivered. When the law can profitably be invoked (which is often the case in a country governed by constitutions standing above the legislature), counsel are retained and suits instituted, all with the celerity and skill which long practice in such work has given. If the cause has a moral bearing, efforts are made to enlist the religious or semi-religious magazines, and the ministers of religion.[1] Deputations proceed to Washington or to the State capital, and lay siege to individual legislators. Sometimes a distinct set of women's societies is created, whose action on and through women is all the more powerful because the deference shown to the so-called weaker sex enables them to do what would be resented in men. Not long ago, I think in Iowa, when a temperance ticket was being run at the elections, parties of ladies gathered in front of the polling booths and sang hymns all day while the citizens voted. Every one remembers what was called the "Women's Whisky War" some ten years back, when, in several western States, bands of women entered the drinking saloons and, by entreaties and reproaches, drove out the customers. In no country has any sentiment which touches a number of persons so many ways of making itself felt; though, to be sure, when the first and chief effort of every group is to convince the world that it is strong, and growing daily stronger, great is the difficulty of determining whether those who are vocal are really numerous or only noisy.

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[1] In Philadelphia during a struggle against the City Boss, the clergy were requested to preach election sermons.

For the promotion of party opinion on the leading questions that divide or occupy parties, there exist, of course, the regular party organizations, whose complex and widely ramified mechanism has been described in an earlier chapter. Opinion is, however, the thing with which this mechanism is at present least occupied. Its main objects are the selection of the party candidates and the conduct of the canvass at elections. Traces of the other purpose remain in the practice of adopting, at State and national conventions, a platform, or declaration of principles and views, which is the electoral manifesto of the party, embodying the tenets which it is supposed to live for. A convention is a body fitted neither by its numbers nor its composition for the discussion and sifting of political doctrines; but, even if it were so fitted, that is not the work to which its masters would set it. A "platform" is invariably prepared by a small committee, and usually adopted by the general committee, and by the convention, with little change. Its tendency is neither to define nor to convince, but rather to attract and to confuse. It is a mixture of conciliation, denunciation, and declamation. It reprobates the opposite party for their past misdeeds, and "views with alarm" their present policy. It repeats the tale of the services which the party of those who issue it has rendered in the past, is replete with sounding democratic generalities, and attempts so to expand and expound the traditional party tenets as to make these include all sound doctrines, and deserve the support of all good citizens. At present neither platforms nor the process that produces them have a powerful influence on the maturing and clarification of political opinion. However, in times more stirring than the present, conventions have recorded the acceptance of certain vital propositions, and rejection of certain dangerous proposals, by one or other of the great parties,[1] and they may again have to do so, not to add that an imprudent platform may lay a party open to damaging attacks. When any important election comes off, the party organization generally sends its speakers out on stumping tours, and distributes a flood of campaign literature. At other

[1] This was especially the case immediately before the Civil War.

times opinion moves in a different plane from that of party machinery, and is scarcely affected by it.

One might expect that in the United States the thoughts of the people would be more equably and uniformly employed on politics than in European countries. The contrary is the case. Opinion, no doubt, is always alive and vigilant, always in process of formation, growth, and decay. But its activity is less continuous and sustained than in Europe, because there is a greater difference between the spring-tide of a presidential campaign year and the neap-tides of the three off years than there is between one year and another under the European system of chambers which may be dissolved and ministries which may be upset at any moment. Excitement at one time is succeeded by exhaustion at another. America suffers from a sort of intermittent fever—what one may call a quintan ague. Every fourth year there come terrible shakings, passing into the hot fit of the presidential election; then follows what physicians call "the interval;" then again the fit. In Europe the persons who move in what I have called the inner sphere of politics, give unbroken attention to political problems, always discussing them both among themselves and before the people. As the men who in America correspond to this set of persons are not organized into a class, and to some extent not engaged in practical politics, the work of discussion has been left to be done, in the three "off years," by the journalists and a few of the more active and thoughtful statesmen, with casual aid from such private citizens as may be interested. Now many problems require uninterrupted and what may be called scientific or professional study. Foreign policy obviously presents such problems. The shortcomings of modern England in the conduct of foreign affairs have been not unreasonably attributed to the fact that, while the attention of her statesmen is constantly distracted from them by domestic struggles, her people have not been accustomed to turn their eyes abroad except when some exciting event, such as the war of 1870 or the Bulgarian massacre of 1876, forces them to do so. Hence a state like Germany, where a strong throne keeps a strong minister permanently in power, obtains advantages which must be credited not wholly to the wisdom of the statesmen but also to the difficulties under which their rivals in more democratic countries labour. America has little occasion to think of foreign affairs, but some of her domestic problems are such as to demand that careful observation and unbroken reflection which neither her executive magistrates, nor her legislatures, nor any leading class among her people now give.

Those who know the United States and have been struck by the quantity of what is called politics there, may think that this description underrates the volume and energy of public political discussion. I admit the endless hubbub, the constant elections in one district or another, the paragraphs in the newspapers as to the movements or intentions of this or that prominent man, the reports of what is doing in Congress and in the State legislatures, the decisions of the Federal Courts in constitutional questions, the rumours about new combinations, the revelations of Ring intrigues, the criticisms on appointments. It is nevertheless true that in proportion to the number of words spoken, articles printed, telegrams sent, and acts performed, less than is needed is done to form serious political thought, and bring practical problems towards a solution. I once travelled through Transylvania with Mr. Leslie Stephen in a peasant's waggon, a rude, long, low structure filled with hay. The roads were rough and stony, the horses jangled their bells, the driver shouted to the horses and cracked his whip, the wheels clanked, the boards rattled, we were deafened and shaken and jolted. We fancied ourselves moving rapidly so long as we looked straight in front, but a glance at the trees on the roadside showed that the speed was about three miles an hour. So the pother and din of American politics keep the people awake, and give them a sense of stir and motion, but the machine of government carries them slowly onward. Fortunately they have no need to hurry. It is not so much by or through the machinery of government as by their own practical good sense, which at last finds a solution the politicians have failed to find, that the American people advance. When a European visitor dines with a company of the best citizens in an Eastern city, such as Boston or Baltimore, he is struck by the acuteness, the insight, the fairness with which the condition and requirements of the country are discussed, the freedom from such passion or class feeling as usually clouds equally able Europeans, the substantial agreement between members of both the great parties as to the reforms that are wanted, the patriotism which is so proud of the real greatness of the Union as frankly to acknowledge its defects, the generous appreciation of all that is best in the character or political methods of other nations. One feels what a reserve fund of wisdom and strength the country has in such men, who so far from being aristocrats or recluses, are usually the persons whom their native fellow-townsmen best know and most respect as prominent in business and in the professions. In ordinary times the practical concern of such men with either national or local politics is no greater, possibly less, than that of the leaders of business in an English town towards its municipal affairs. But when there comes an uprising against the bosses, it is these men who are called upon to put themselves at the head of it; or when a question like that of Civil Service reform has been before the nation for some time, it is their opinion which strikes the keynote for that of their city or district, and which shames or alarms the professional politicians. Men of the same type, though individually less conspicuous than those whom I take as examples, are to be found in many of the smaller towns, especially in the Eastern and Middle States, and as time goes on their influence grows. Much of the value of this most educated and reflective class in America consists in their being no longer blindly attached to their party, because more alive to the principles for which parties ought to exist. They may be numerically a small minority of the voters, but as in many States the two regular parties command a nearly equal normal voting strength, a small section detached from either party can turn an election by throwing its vote for the candidate, to whichever party he belongs, whom it thinks capable and honest. Thus a comparatively independent group wields a power in elections altogether disproportionate to its numbers, and by a sort of side wind can not only make its hostility feared, but secure a wider currency for its opinions. What opinion chiefly needs in America in order to control the politicians is not so much men of leisure, for men of leisure may be dilettantes and may lack a grip of realities, but a more sustained activity on the part of the men of vigorously independent minds, a more sedulous effort on their part to impress their views upon the masses, and a disposition on the part of the ordinary well meaning but often inattentive citizens to prefer the realities of good administration to outworn party cries.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

THE FATALISM OF THE MULTITUDE

One feature of thought and sentiment in the United States needs a chapter to itself because it has been by most observers of the country either ignored or confounded with a phenomenon which is at bottom quite different. This is a fatalistic attitude of mind, which, since it disposes men to acquiesce in the rule of numbers, has been, when perceived, attributed to or identified with what is commonly called the Tyranny of the Majority. The tendency to fatalism is never far from mankind. It is one of the first solutions of the riddle of the earth propounded by metaphysics. It is one of the last propounded by science. It has at all times formed the background to religions. No race is naturally less disposed to a fatalistic view of things than is the Anglo-American, with its restless self-reliant energy,

> Nil actum reputans dum quid restaret agendum,

its slender taste for introspection or meditation. Nevertheless even in this people the conditions of life and politics have bred a sentiment or tendency which seems best described by the name of fatalism.

In small and rude communities, every free man, or at least every head of a household, feels his own significance and realizes his own independence. He relies on himself, he is little interfered with by neighbours or rulers.[1] His will and his action count for something in the conduct of the affairs of the community he belongs to, yet common affairs are few compared to those in which he must depend on his own exertions. The most striking pictures of individualism that literature has preserved for us are those of the Homeric heroes, and of the even more terrible and self-reliant warriors of the Scandinavian sagas, men like Ragnar Lodbrog and Egil, son of Skallagrim, who did not regard even the gods, but trusted to their own might and main. In more developed states of society organized on an oligarchic basis, such as were the feudal kingdoms of the Middle Ages, or in socially aristocratic countries such as most parts of Europe have remained down to our own time, the bulk of the people are no doubt in a dependent condition, but each person derives a certain sense of personal consequence from the strength of his group and of the person or family at the head of it. Moreover, the upper class, being the class which thinks and writes, as well as leads in action, impresses its own type upon the character of the whole nation, and that type is still individualistic, with a strong consciousness of personal free will, and a tendency for each man, if not to think for himself, at least to value and to rely on his own opinion.

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[1] The kind of self-reliant attitude I am seeking to describe is quite a different thing from the supposed "state of nature" in which a man has no legal relations with his fellows. It may exist among the members of a community closely united by legal ties. It was evidently strong among the early Romans, who were united by such ties into family and clan groups.

Let us suppose, however, that the aristocratic structure of society has been dissolved, that the old groups have disappeared, that men have come to feel themselves members rather of the nation than of classes, or groups, or communities within the nation, that a levelling process has destroyed the ascendency of birth and rank, that large landed estates no longer exist, and that many persons in what was previously the humbler class are found possessed of property. Under such conditions of social equality the habit of intellectual command and individual self-confidence will have vanished from the leading class, which creates the type of national character, and will exist nowhere in the nation.

Let us suppose, further, that political equality has gone hand in hand with the levelling down of social eminence. Every citizen enjoys the same right of electing the representatives and officials, the same right of himself becoming a representative or an official. Every one is equally concerned in the conduct of public affairs, and since no man's opinion, however great his superiority in wealth, knowledge, or personal capacity, is legally entitled to any more weight than another's, no man is entitled to set special value on his own opinion, or to expect others to defer to it; for pretensions to authority will be promptly resented. All disputes are referred to the determination of the majority, there being no legal distinction between the naturally strong and the naturally weak, between the rich and the poor, between the wise and the foolish. In such a state of things the strong man's self-confidence and sense of individual force will inevitably have been lowered, because he will feel that he is only one of many, that his vote or voice counts for no more than that of his neighbour, that he can prevail, if at all, only by keeping himself on a level with his neighbour and recognizing the latter's personality as being every whit equal to his own.

Suppose further that all this takes place in an enormously large and populous country, where the governing voters are counted by so many millions that each individual feels himself a mere drop in the ocean, the influence which he can exert privately, whether by his personal gifts or by his wealth, being confined to the small circle of his town or neighbourhood. On all sides there stretches round him an illimitable horizon; and beneath the blue vault which covers that horizon there is everywhere the same busy multitude with its clamour of mingled voices which he hears close by. In this multitude his own being seems lost. He has the sense of insignificance which overwhelms us when at night we survey the host of heaven and know that from even the nearest star this planet of ours is invisible.

In such a country, where complete political equality is strengthened and perfected by complete social equality, where the will of the majority is absolute, unquestioned, always invoked to decide every question, and where the numbers which decide are so vast that one comes to regard them as one regards the largely working forces of nature, we may expect to find certain feelings and beliefs dominant in the minds of men.

One of these is that the majority must prevail. All free government rests on this, for there is no other way of working free government. To obey the majority is therefore both a necessity and a duty, a duty because the alternative would be ruin and the breaking-up of laws.

Out of this dogma there grows up another which is less distinctly admitted, and indeed held rather implicitly than consciously, that the majority is right. And out of both of these there grows again the feeling, still less consciously held, but not less truly operative, that it is vain to oppose or censure the majority.

It may seem that there is a long step from the first of these propositions to the second and third; and that, in fact, the very existence of a minority striving with a majority implies that there must be many who hold the majority to be wrong, and are prepared to resist it. Men do not at once abandon their views because they have been outvoted; they reiterate their views, they reorganize their party, they hope to prevail, and often do prevail in a subsequent trial of strength.

All this is doubtless involved in the very methods of popular government. But it is nevertheless true that the belief in the rights of the majority lies very near to the belief that the majority must be right. As self-government is based on the idea that each man is more likely to be right than to be wrong, and that one man's opinion must be treated as equally good with another's, there is a presumption that when twenty thousand vote one way and twenty-one thousand another, the view of the greater number is the better view. The habit of deference to a decision actually given strengthens this presumption, and weaves it into the texture of every mind. A conscientious citizen feels that he ought to obey the determination of the majority, and naturally prefers to think that which he obeys to be right. A citizen languidly interested in the question at issue finds it easier to comply with and adopt the view of the majority than to hold out against it. A small number of men with strong convictions or warm party feeling will for a time resist. But even they feel differently towards their cause after it has been defeated from what they did while it had still a prospect of success. They know that in the same proportion in which their supporters are dismayed the majority is emboldened and confirmed in its views. It will be harder to fight a second battle than it was to fight the first, for there is (so to speak) a steeper slope of popular disapproval to be climbed. This sufficiently appears from the importance attached in self-governing countries to test elections. In England what is called a "by-election," *i.e.* the election of a member of Parliament to fill a casual vacancy, is not only taken by partisans as an index of their strength in the nation at large, but if it can be regarded as typical, strengthens or weakens a party by turning the minds of waverers. In the United States, when the elections in any State precede by a few weeks a presidential contest, their effect has sometimes been so great as virtually to determine that contest by filling one side with hope and the other with despondency. Those who prefer to swim with the stream are numerous everywhere, and their votes have as much weight as the votes of the keenest partisans. A man of convictions may insist that the arguments on both sides are after the polling just what they were before. But the average man will repeat his arguments with less faith, less zeal, more of a secret fear that he may be wrong, than he did while the majority was still doubtful; and after every reassertion by the majority of its judgment, his knees grow feebler till at last they refuse to carry him into the combat.

The larger the scale on which the majority works, the more potent are these tendencies. When the scene of action is a small commonwealth, the individual voters are many of them personally known to one another, and the causes which determine their votes are understood and discounted. When it is a moderately-sized country, the towns or districts which compose it are not too numerous for reckoning to overtake and imagination to picture them, and in many cases their action can be explained by well-known reasons which may be represented as transitory. But when the theatre stretches itself to a continent, when the number of voters is counted by many millions, the wings of imagination droop, and the huge voting mass ceases to be thought of as merely so many individual human beings no wiser or better than one's own neighbours. The phenomena seem to pass into the category of the phenomena of nature, governed by far-reaching and inexorable laws whose character science has only imperfectly ascertained. They inspire a sort of awe, a sense of individual impotence, like that which man feels when he contemplates the majestic and eternal forces of the inanimate world. Such a feeling is even stronger when it operates, not on a cohesive minority which had lately hoped, or may yet hope, to become a majority, but on a single man or small group of persons cherishing some opinion which the mass disapproves. Thus out of the mingled feelings that the multitude will prevail, and that the multitude, because it will prevail, must be right, there grows a self-distrust, a despondency, a disposition to fall into line, to acquiesce in the dominant opinion, to submit thought as well as action to the encompassing power of numbers. Now and then a resolute man will, like Athanasius, stand alone against the world. But such a man must have, like Athanasius, some special spring of inward strength; and the difficulty of winning over others against the overwhelming weight of the multitude will, even in such a man, dull the edge of hope and enterprise. An individual seeking to make his view prevail, looks forth on his hostile fellow-countrymen as a solitary swimmer, raised high on a billow miles from land, looks over the countless waves that divide him from the shore, and quails to think how small the chance that his strength can bear him thither.

This tendency to acquiescence and submission, this sense of the insignificance of individual effort, this belief that the affairs of men are swayed by large forces whose movement may be studied but cannot be turned, I have ventured to call the Fatalism of the Multitude. It is often confounded with the tyranny of the majority, but is at bottom different, though, of course, its existence makes tyranny by the majority easier and more complete. The tyranny of the majority means, or ought to mean, for it is a phrase apt to be loosely used, the disposition of the greater number to unfairly impose their will on the smaller number. A majority is tyrannical when it cuts short the discussion needed to give the minority a fair chance of convincing it that it is wrong, or when it passes laws restricting individual freedom in matters which law need not touch, or even when it subjects to social penalties persons who disagree with it in matters not essential to the common welfare. But the fatalistic attitude I have been seeking to describe does not imply any exercise of power by the majority at all. It may rather seem to soften and make less odious such an exercise of power, may even dispense with that exercise, because it disposes a minority to submit without the need of a command, to spontaneously renounce its own view and fall in with the view which the majority has expressed. In the fatalism of the multitude there is neither legal nor moral compulsion; there is merely a loss of resisting power, a diminished sense of personal responsibility and of the duty to battle for one's own opinions, such as has been bred in some peoples by the belief in an overmastering fate. It is true that the force to which the citizen of the vast democracy submits is a moral force, not that of an unapproachable Allah, nor of the unchangeable laws of matter. But it is a moral force acting on so vast a scale, and from causes so often unpredictable, that its effect on the mind of the individual may well be compared with that which religious or scientific fatalism creates.

No one will suppose that the above sketch is intended to apply literally to the United States, where in some matters legal restrictions check a majority, where local self-government gives the humblest citizen a sphere for public action, where individualism is still in many forms and directions so vigorous. An American explorer, an American settler in new lands, an American man of business pushing a great enterprise, is a being as bold and resourceful as the world has ever seen. All I seek to convey is that there are in the United States signs of such a fatalistic temper, signs which one must expect to find wherever a vast population governs itself under a system of complete social and political equality. And there exist in the American Republic several conditions which specially tend to engender such a temper.

One of these is the unbounded freedom of discussion. Every view, every line of policy, has its fair chance before the people. No one can say that audience has been denied him, and comfort himself with the hope that, when he is heard, the world will come round to him. For the sense of grievance and injustice, which so often feeds the flame of resistance in a persecuted minority, there is less cause in a country like this, where the freedom of the press, the right of public meeting, the right of association and agitation have been legally extended, and are daily exerted, more widely than anywhere else in the world. He whom the multitude condemns or ignores has no further court of appeal to look to. Rome has spoken. His cause has been heard and judgment has gone against him.

Another is the intense faith which the Americans have in the soundness of their institutions, and in the future of their country. Foreign critics have said that they think themselves the special objects of the protecting care of Providence. If this be so, it is matter neither for surprise nor for sarcasm. They are a religious people. They are trying, and that on the largest scale, the most remarkable experiment in government the world has yet witnessed. They have more than once been surrounded by perils which affrighted the stoutest hearts, and they have escaped from these perils into peace and prosperity. There is among pious persons a deep conviction—I have often heard it expressed in sermons and prayers with evident sincerity—that the nation has been, and is being, more than other nations, guided by the hand of God. And, even when the feeling does not take a theological expression, the belief in what is called the "Mission of the Republic" for all humanity is scarcely less ardent. But the foundation of the Republic is confidence in the multitude, in its honesty and good sense, in the certainty of its arriving at right conclusions. Pessimism is the luxury of a handful; optimism is the private delight, as well as public profession, of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand, for nowhere does the individual associate himself more constantly and directly with the greatness of his country.

Now, such a faith in the people, and in the forces that sway them, disposes a man to acquiescence and submission. He cannot long hold that he is right and the multitude wrong. He cannot suppose that the country will ultimately suffer because it refuses to adopt what he urges upon it. As he comes of an energetic stock, he will use all proper means to state his views, and give them every chance of prevailing. But he submits more readily than an Englishman would do, ay, even to what an Englishman would think an injury to his private rights. When a man's legal right has been infringed, he will confidently proceed to enforce at law his claim to redress, knowing that even against the government a just cause will prevail. But if he fails at law, the sense of his individual insignificance will still his voice. It may seem a trivial illustration to observe that when a railway train is late, or a waggon drawn up opposite a warehouse door stops the horse-car for five minutes, the passengers take the delay far more coolly and uncomplainingly than Englishmen would do. But the feeling is the same as that which makes good citizens bear with the tyranny of Bosses. It is all in the course of nature. What is an individual that he should make a fuss because he loses a few minutes, or is taxed too highly? The sense of the immense multitude around him presses down the individual; and, after all, he reflects, "things will come out right" in the end.

It is hard adequately to convey the impression which the vastness of the country, and the swift growth of its population make upon the European visitor. I well remember how it once came on me after climbing a high mountain in an Eastern State. All around was thick forest; but the setting sun lit up peaks sixty or seventy miles away, and flashed here and there on the windings of some river past a town so far off as to seem only a spot of white. I opened my map, a large map, which I had to spread upon the rocks to examine, and tried to make out, as one would have done in England or Scotland, the points in the view.

The map however was useless, because the whole area of the landscape beneath me covered only two or three square inches upon it. From such a height in Scotland the eye would have ranged from sea to sea. But here when one tried to reckon how many more equally wide stretches of landscape lay between this peak and the Mississippi, which is itself only a third of the way across the continent, the calculation seemed endless and was soon abandoned. Many an Englishman comes by middle life to know nearly all England like a glove. He has travelled on all the great railroads; there is hardly a large town in which he has not acquaintances, hardly a county whose scenery is not familiar to him. But no American can be familiar with more than a small part of his country, for his country is a continent. And all Americans live their life through under the sense of this prodigious and daily growing multitude around them, which seems vaster the more you travel, and the more you realize its uniformity.

We need not here inquire whether the fatalistic attitude I have sought to sketch is the source of more good or evil. It seems at any rate inevitable: nor does it fail to produce a sort of pleasure, for what the individual loses as an individual he seems in a measure to regain as one of the multitude. If the individual is not strong, he is at any rate as strong as any one else. His will counts for as much as any other will. He is overborne by no superiority. Most men are fitter to make part of the multitude than to strive against it. Obedience is to most sweeter than independence; the Roman Catholic Church inspires in its children a stronger affection than any form of Protestantism, for she takes their souls in charge, and assures them that, with obedience, all will be well.

That which we are presently concerned to note is how greatly such a tendency as I have described facilitates the action of opinion as a governing power, enabling it to prevail more swiftly and more completely than in countries where men have not yet learned to regard the voice of the multitude as the voice of fate. Many submit willingly; some unwillingly, yet they submit. Rarely does any one hold out and venture to tell the great majority of his countrymen that they are wrong.

Moreover public opinion acquires a solidity which strengthens the whole body politic. Questions on which the masses have made up their minds pass out of the region of practical discussion. Controversy is confined to minor topics, and however vehemently it may rage over these, it disturbs the great underlying matters of agreement no more than a tempest stirs the depths of the Atlantic. Public order becomes more easily maintained, because individuals and small groups have learned to submit even when they feel themselves aggrieved. The man who murmurs against the world, who continues to preach a hopeless cause, incurs contempt, and is apt to be treated as a sort of lunatic. He who is too wise to murmur and too proud to go on preaching to unheeding ears, comes to think that if his doctrine is true, yet the time is not ripe for it. He may be in error; but if he is right, the world will ultimately see that he is right even without his effort. One way or another he finds it hard to believe that this vast mass and force of popular thought in which he lives and moves can be ultimately wrong. *Securus iudicat orbis terrarum.*

CHAPTER LXXXV

THE TYRANNY OF THE MAJORITY

THE expression "tyranny of the majority" is commonly used to denote any abuse by the majority of the powers which it enjoys in free countries under and through the law, and in all countries outside the law. Such abuse will not be tyrannous in the sense of being illegal, as men called a usurper like Dionysius of Syracuse or Louis Napoleon in France a tyrant, for in free countries whatever the majority chooses to do in the prescribed constitutional way will be legal. It will be tyrannous in the sense of the lines

> "O it is excellent
> To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
> To use it like a giant."

That is to say, tyranny consists in the wanton and improper use of strength by the stronger, in the use of it to do things which one equal would not attempt against another. A majority is tyrannical when it decides without hearing the minority, when it suppresses fair and temperate criticism on its own acts, when it insists on restraining men in matters where restraint is not required by the common interest, when it forces men to contribute money to objects which they disapprove, and which the common interest does not demand. The element of tyranny lies in the wantonness of the act, a wantonness springing from the sense of overwhelming power, or in the fact that it is a misuse for one purpose of power granted for another. It consists not in the form of the act, which may be perfectly legal, but in the spirit and temper it reveals, and in the sense of injustice and oppression which it evokes in the minority.

Philosophers have long since perceived that the same tendencies to a wanton abuse of power which exist in a despot or a ruling oligarchy may be expected in a democracy from the ruling majority, because they are tendencies incidental to human nature.[1] The danger was felt and feared by the sages of 1787, and a passage in the *Federalist* (No. L.) dwells on the safeguards which the great size of a Federal republic, and the diverse elements of which it will be composed, offer against the tendency of a majority to oppress a minority.

Since De Tocqueville dilated upon this as the capital fault of the American government and people, Europeans, already prepared to expect to find the tyranny of the majority a characteristic sin of democratic nations, have been accustomed to think of the United States as disgraced by it, and on the strength of this instance have predicted it as a necessary result of the growth of democracy in the Old World. It is therefore worth while to inquire what foundation exists for the reproach as addressed to the Americans of to-day.

We may look for signs of this tyranny in three quarters—firstly, in the legislation of Congress; secondly, in the constitutions and statutes of the States; thirdly, in the action of public opinion and sentiment outside the sphere of law.

The Federal Constitution, which has not only limited the competence of Congress but hedged it round with many positive prohibitions, has closed some of the avenues by which a majority might proceed to abuse its powers. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, opportunities for debate, are all amply secured. The power of taxation, and that of regulating commerce, might conceivably be used to oppress certain classes of persons, as, for instance, if a prohibitory duty were to be laid on certain articles which a minority desired and the majority condemned the use of. But nothing of the sort has been attempted. Whatever may be thought of the expediency of the present tariff, which no doubt favours one class, it cannot be said to oppress any class. In its political action, as, for instance, during the struggle over slavery, when for a while it refused to receive Abolitionist petitions, and even tried to prevent the transmission by mail of Abolitionist matter, and again during and after the war in some of its reconstruction measures, the majority, under the pressure of excitement, exercised its powers harshly and unwisely. But such political action is hardly the kind of action to which the charge we are examining applies.

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[1] The comparison of the majority to a monarch is as old as Aristotle. μόναρχος ὁ δῆμος γίνεται (*Polit.* iv. 4, 26). ὥσπερ τυράννῳ τῷ δήμῳ χαριζόμενοι (*Ibid.* ii. 12, 4).

In the States, a majority of the citizens may act either directly in enacting (or amending) a constitution, or through their legislature by passing statutes. We might expect to find instances of abuse of power more in the former than in the latter class of cases, because though the legislature is habitually and the people of the State only intermittently active, the legislatures have now been surrounded by a host of constitutional limitations which a tyrannical majority would need some skill to evade. However, one discovers wonderfully little in the State Constitutions now in force of which a minority can complain. These instruments contain a great deal of ordinary law and administrative law. If the tendency to abuse legislative power to the injury of any class were general, instances of it could not fail to appear. One does not find them. There are some provisions strictly regulating corporations, and especially railroads and banks, which may perhaps be unwise, and which in limiting the modes of using capital apply rather to the rich than to the masses. But such provisions cannot be called wanton or oppressive.

The same remark applies to the ordinary statutes of the States, so far as I have been able to ascertain their character. They can rarely be used to repress opinion or its expression, because nearly all the State Constitutions contain ample guarantees for free speech, a free press, and the right of public meeting. For the same reason, they cannot encroach on the personal liberty of the citizen, nor on the full enjoyment of private property. In all such fundamentals the majority has prudently taken the possible abuse of its power out of the hands of the legislature.

When we come to minor matters, we are met by the difficulty of determining what is a legitimate exercise of legislative authority. Nowhere are men agreed as to the limits of State interference. Some few think that law ought not to restrict the sale of intoxicants at all; many more that it ought not to make the procuring of them, for purposes of pleasure, difficult or impossible. Others hold that the common welfare justifies prohibition. Some deem it unjust to tax a man, and especially an unmarried man, for the support of public schools, or at any rate of public schools other than elementary. To most Roman Catholics it seems unjust to refuse denominational schools a share of the funds raised by taxing, among other citizens, those who hold it a duty to send their children to schools in which their own faith is inculcated. Some think a law tyrannical which forbids a man to exclude others from ground which he keeps waste and barren, while others blame the law which permits a man to reserve, as they think tyrannically, large tracts of country for his own personal enjoyment. So, in the case of religion, any form of State establishment, or State endowment, or even State recognition, of a particular creed or religious body will by some be deemed an abuse, by others a proper and necessary use of State authority. Remembering such differences of opinion, all I can say is that even those who take the narrower view of State functions will find little to censure in the legislation of American States. They may blame the restriction or prohibition of the sale of intoxicants. They may think that the so-called "moral legislation" for securing the purity of literature, and for protecting the young against various temptations, attempts too much. They may question the expediency of the legislation intended for the benefit of working men. But there are few of these provisions which can fairly be called wanton or tyrannical, which display a spirit that ignores or tramples on the feelings or rights of a minority. The least defensible statutes are perhaps those which California has aimed at the Chinese (who are not technically a minority since they are not citizens at all), and those by which some Southern States have endeavoured to accentuate the separation between whites and negroes, forbidding them to intermarry or to be taught in the same schools or colleges,

We come now to the third way in which a majority may tyrannize, *i.e.* by the imposition of purely social penalties, from mere disapproval up to insult, injury, and boycotting. The greatest of Athenian statesmen claimed for his countrymen that they set an example to the rest of Greece in that enlightened toleration which does not even visit with black looks those who hold unpopular opinions, or venture in anywise to differ from the prevailing sentiment. Such enlightenment is doubtless one of the latest fruits and crowns of a high civilization, and all the more to be admired when it is not the result of indifference, but co-exists with energetic action in the field of politics or religion or social reform.

If social persecution exists in the America of to-day, it is only in a few dark corners. One may travel all over the Northern and Western States, mingling with all classes and reading the newspapers, without hearing of it. As respects religion, so long as one does not openly affront the feelings of one's neighbours one may say what one likes, and go or not go to church. Doubtless a man, and still more a woman, will be better thought of, especially in a country-place or small town, if he or she is a church member and Sunday school teacher. But no one is made to suffer in mind, body, or estate for simply holding aloof from a religious or any other voluntary association. He would be more likely to suffer in an English village. Even in the South, where a stricter standard of orthodoxy is maintained among the clergy of the Protestant bodies than in the North or West, a layman may think as he pleases. It is the same as regards social questions, and of course as regards politics. To boycott a man for his politics, or even to discourage his shop in the way not uncommon in some parts of rural England and Ireland, would excite indignation in America; as the attempts of some labour organizations to boycott firms resisting strikes have aroused strong displeasure. If in some parts of the South a man took to cultivating the friendship of negroes and organizing them in clubs, or if in parts of the West a man made himself the champion of the Indians, he might find his life become unpleasant, though one hears little of recent instances of the kind. In any part of the country he who should use his rights of property in a hard or unneighbourly way; who, for instance, possessing a handsome park, with perhaps a waterfall or beautiful views over the country, should build a high wall round it and refuse all access, would be reprobated and sent to Coventry. I do not know of such cases; perhaps the fear of general disapproval prevents their arising.

In saying that there is no social persecution, I do not deny that in parts of the country, as, for instance, in the smaller towns of the West, there is too little allowance for difference of tastes and pursuits, too much disposition to expect every family to conform to the same standard of propriety, and follow the same habits of life. A person acting, however innocently, without regard to the beliefs and prejudices of his neighbours would be talked about, and perhaps looked askance upon. Many a man used to the variety of London or Washington would feel the monotony of Western life, and the uniform application of its standards, irksome and even galling. But, so far as I could ascertain, he would have nothing specific to complain of. And these Western towns become every day more like the cities of the East. Taking the country all in all, it is hard to imagine more complete liberty than individuals or groups enjoy either to express and propagate their views, or to act as they please within the limits of the law, limits which, except as regards the sale of intoxicants, are drawn as widely as in Western Europe.

Forty or fifty years ago it was very different. Congress was then as now debarred from oppressive legislation. But in some Northern States the legislatures were not slow to deal harshly with persons or societies who ran counter to the dominant sentiment. The persecution of Miss Prudence Crandall, a benevolent Quakeress who had opened a school for negro children, by the legislature of Connecticut as well as by her own townsfolk, is a well-remembered instance. A good many rigidly Puritanic statutes stood unrepealed in New England, though not always put in force against the transgressor. In the South laws of the utmost severity punished whosoever should by word or act assail the "peculiar institution." Even more tyrannical than the laws was the sentiment of the masses. In Boston a mob, a well-dressed mob, largely composed of the richer sort of people, hunted Garrison for his life through the streets because he was printing an Abolitionist journal; a mob in Illinois shot Elijah Lovejoy for the same offence; and as late as 1844 another Illinois crowd killed Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, who, whatever may be thought of his honesty or his doctrines, was as much entitled to the protection of the laws as any other citizen. In the South, as every one knows, there was a reign of terror as regards slavery. Any one suspected of Abolitionism might think himself lucky if he escaped with tar and feathers, and was not shot or flogged almost to death. This extreme sensitiveness was of course confined to a few burning questions; but the habit of repressing by law or without law obnoxious opinions was likely to spread, and did spread, at least in the South, to other matters also. As regards thought and opinion generally over the Union, De Tocqueville declares—

> "Je ne connais pas de pays où il règne, en général, moins d'indépendance d'esprit et de véritable liberté de discussion qu'en Amérique. La majorité trace un cercle formidable autour de la pensée. Au dedans de ces limites, l'écrivain est libre, mais malheur a lui s'il ose en sortir ! Ce n'est pas qu'il ait à craindre un auto-da-fé, mais il est en butte à des dégoûts de tout genre et à

des persécutions de tous les jours. La carrière politique lui est fermée : il a offensé la seule puissance qui ait la faculté de l'ouvrir. On lui refuse tout, jusqu'à la gloire."—Vol. ii. ch. 7.

He ascribes not only the want of great statesmen, but the low level of literature, learning, and thought, to this total absence of intellectual freedom.

It is hard for any one who knows the Northern States now to believe that this can have been a just description of them so lately as fifty-four years ago. Supposing, however, that it was a just description, how are we to explain the change to the absolute freedom and tolerance of to-day, when every man may sit under his own fig-tree and say and do (provided he do not drink) what he pleases, none making him afraid?

One is inclined to suspect that De Tocqueville, struck by the enormous power of general opinion, may have attributed too much of the submissiveness which he observed to the active coercion of the majority, and too little to that tendency of the minority to acquiescence which has been discussed in the last preceding chapter. Setting this aside, however, and assuming that the majority did in those days really tyrannize, several causes may be assigned for its having ceased to do so. One is the absence of violent passions. Slavery, the chief source of ferocity, was to the heated minds of the South a matter of life or death; Abolitionism seemed to many in the North a disloyal heresy, the necessary parent of disunion. Since the Civil War there has been no crisis calculated to tempt majorities to abuse their legal powers. Partisanship has for years past been more intense in Great Britain—not to say Ireland—and France than in America. When De Tocqueville saw the United States the democratic spirit was in the heyday of its youthful strength, flushed with self-confidence, intoxicated with the exuberance of its own freedom. The first generation of statesmen whose authority had restrained the masses, had just quitted the stage. The anarchic teachings of Jefferson had borne fruit. Administration and legislation, hitherto left to the educated classes, had been seized by the rude hands of men of low social position and scanty knowledge. A reign of brutality and violence had set in over large regions of the country. Neither literature nor the universities exercised as yet any sensible power. The masses were so persuaded of their immense superiority to all other peoples, past as well as present, that they would listen to nothing but flattery, and their intolerance spread from politics into every other sphere. Our European philosopher may therefore have been correct in his description of the facts as he saw them: he erred in supposing them essential to a democratic government. As the nation grew, it purged away these faults of youth and inexperience, and the stern discipline of the Civil War taught it sobriety, and in giving it something to be really proud of, cleared away the fumes of empty self-conceit.

The years which have passed since the war have been years of immensely extended and popularized culture and enlightenment. Bigotry in religion and in everything else has been broken down. The old landmarks have been removed: the "latest results," as people call them, of European thought have become more familiar to the American masses than to the masses anywhere in Europe. At the same time, as all religious and socio-religious questions, except those which relate to education, are entirely disjoined from politics and the State, neither those who stand by the old views nor those who embrace the new carry that bitterness into their controversies which is natural in countries where religious questions are also party questions, where the clergy are a privileged and salaried order, where the throne is held bound to defend the altar, and the workman is taught to believe that both are leagued against him. The influence of these causes will, it may be predicted, be permanent. Should passion again invade politics, or should the majority become convinced that its interests will be secured by overtaxing the few, one can imagine the tendency of fifty years ago reappearing in new forms. But in no imaginable future is there likely to be any attempt to repress either by law or by opinion the free exercise and expression of speculative thought on morals, on religion, and indeed on every matter not within the immediate range of current politics.

If the above account be correct, the tyranny of the majority is no longer a blemish on the American system, and the charges brought against democracy from the supposed example of America are groundless. As tyranny is one of those evils which tends to perpetuate itself, those who had been oppressed revenging themselves by becoming oppressors in their turn, the fact that a danger once dreaded has now disappeared is no small evidence of the recuperative forces of the American government, and the healthy tone of the American people.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

WHEREIN PUBLIC OPINION FAILS

WITHOUT anticipating the criticism of democratic government in general which belongs to a later chapter, we may wind up the examination of public opinion by considering what are its merits as a governing and overseeing power, and, on the other hand, what defects, due either to inherent weakness or to the want of appropriate machinery, prevent it from attaining the ideal which the Americans have set before themselves. I begin with the defects.

The obvious weakness of government by opinion is the difficulty of ascertaining it. English administrators in India lament the impossibility of learning the sentiments of the natives, because in the East the populations, the true masses, are dumb. The press is written by a handful of persons who, in becoming writers have ceased to belong to the multitude, and the multitude does not read. The difficulties of Western statesmen are due to an opposite cause. The populations are highly articulate. Such is the din of voices that it is hard to say which cry prevails, which is swelled by many, which only by a few throats. The organs of opinion seem almost as numerous as the people themselves, and they are all engaged in representing their own view as that of the "people." Like other valuable articles, genuine opinion is surrounded by many counterfeits. The one positive test applicable is that of an election, and an election can at best do no more than test the division of opinion between two or three great parties, leaving subsidiary issues uncertain, while in many cases the result depends so much on the personal merits of the candidates as to render interpretation difficult. An American statesman is in no danger of consciously running counter to public opinion, but how is he to discover whether any particular opinion is making or losing way, how is he to gauge the voting strength its advocates can put forth, or the moral authority which its advocates can exert? Elections cannot be further multiplied, for they are too numerous already. The *referendum*, or plan of submitting a specific question to the popular vote, is the logical resource, but it is troublesome and costly to take the votes of millions of people over an area so large as that of one of the greater States; much more then is this method difficult to apply in Federal matters. This is the first drawback to the rule of public opinion. The choice of persons for offices is only an indirect and often unsatisfactory way of declaring views of policy, and as the elections at which such choices are made come at fixed intervals, time is lost in waiting for the opportunity of delivering the popular judgment.

The framers of the American Constitution may not have perceived that in labouring to produce a balance, as well between the National and State Governments as between the Executive and Congress, in weakening each single authority in the Government by dividing powers and functions among each of them, they were throwing upon the nation at large, that is, upon unorganized public opinion, more work than it had ever discharged in England, or could duly discharge in a country so divided by distances and jealousies as the United States then were. Distances and jealousies have been lessened. But under the system of restrictions and balances, the habit of self-distrust and submission to the popular voice has become unexpectedly strong among legislators.

American legislatures are bodies with limited powers, their members less qualified, by shortness of tenure as well as other causes, for the work of constructive legislation, than are those of most European chambers. They are accustomed to consider themselves delegates from their respective States and districts, responsible to those districts, rather than councillors of the whole nation labouring for its general interests, and they have no executive leaders, seeing that no official sits either in Congress or in a State legislature, or possesses any authority in these bodies. Hence if at any time the people desire measures which do not merely repeal a law or direct an appropriation, but establish some administrative scheme, or mark out some positive line of financial policy, or provide some body of rules for dealing with such a topic as bankruptcy, railroad or canal communications the management of public lands, and so forth, the people must decide for themselves what they want and put their wishes into practical shape. In other words, public opinion must hammer out a project, and present it to Congress or to the State legislature (as the case may be), with such a voice of command as to compel its embodiment in and passage as an Act. But public opinion has no machinery available for the purpose. When members of Congress think the country desires legislation, they begin to prepare bills, but the want of leadership and of constructive skill often prevents such bills from satisfying the needs of the case, and the timidity of Congress, fearing to go beyond what opinion desires, retards the accomplishment of the public wish.[1] The people who are the power entitled to say what they want, are less qualified to say how, and in what form, they are to obtain it, or in other words, public opinion can determine ends, but is less fit to examine and select means to those ends. It is slow and clumsy in grappling with large problems. It looks at them, talks incessantly about them, complains of Congress for not solving them, is distressed that they do not solve themselves. But they remain unsolved. Vital decisions have usually hung fire longer than they would have been likely to do in European countries. The war of 1812 seemed on the point of breaking out over and over again before it came at last. The absorption of Texas was a question of many years. The extension of slavery question came before the nation in 1819; after 1840 it was the chief source of trouble; year by year it grew more menacing; year by year the nation was seen more clearly to be drifting towards the breakers. Everybody felt that something must be done. But it was the function of no one authority in particular to discover a remedy, as it would have been the function of a cabinet in Europe. I do not say the sword might not in any case have been invoked, for the temperature of Southern feeling had been steadily rising to war point. But the history of 1840-60 leaves the impression that the constitutional organs of government did less to grapple with the problem than a people may expect from its organs. Some other national questions, less dangerous, but serious, are now in the same condition. The question of reducing the surplus national revenue seems to have already puzzled statesmen and the people at large longer than a similar question would be suffered to do in Europe. I do not say that a European nation would decide it any better; but imagine that, whether wisely or foolishly, a European nation would already have decided it somehow. And the same thing holds, *mutatis mutandis*, of State Governments. There also there is no set of persons whose special duty it is to find remedies for admitted evils. The structure of the government provides the requisite machinery neither for forming nor for guiding a popular opinion, disposed of itself to recognize only broad and patent facts, and to be swayed only by such obvious reasons as it needs little reflection to follow. Admirable practical acuteness, admirable ingenuity in inventing and handling machinery, whether of iron and wood or of human beings, co-exist, in the United States, with an aversion to new abstract propositions, and trains of theoretic reasoning. The liability to be caught by fallacies, the inability to recognize facts which are not seen but must be inferentially found to exist, the incapacity to imagine a future which must result from the unchecked operation of present forces,[1] these are indeed the defects of the ordinary citizen in all countries, and if they are conspicuous in America, it is only because the ordinary citizen, who is more intelligent there than elsewhere, is also more potent.

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[1] These remarks apply in a less degree to State legislatures, bodies which are more prone to try all sorts of experiments than Congress is, but are often very unskilful.

It may be replied to these observations, which are a criticism as well upon the American frame of government as upon public opinion, that the need for constructive legislation is small in America, because the habit of the country is to leave things to themselves. This is not really the fact. A great state has always problems of administration to deal with; these problems do not become less grave as time runs on, and the hand of government is beginning to-day to be invoked in America for many purposes thought to be of common utility with which legislation did not formerly intermeddle.

There is more force in the remark that we must remember how much is gained as well as lost by the slow and hesitating working of public opinion in the United States. So tremendous a force would be dangerous if it moved rashly. Acting over and gathered from an enormous area, in which there exist many local differences, it needs time, often a long time, to become conscious of the preponderance of one set of tendencies over another. The elements both of local difference and of class difference must be (so to speak) well shaken up together, and each part brought into contact with the rest, before the mixed liquid can produce a precipitate in the form of a practical conclusion. And in this is seen the difference between the excellence as a governing power of opinion in the whole Union, and opinion within the limits of a particular State. The systems of constitutional machinery by which public sentiment acts are similar in the greater and in the smaller area; the constitutional maxims practically identical. But public opinion, which moves slowly, temperately, and surely, in the field of national affairs, is sometimes hasty and reckless in State affairs. The population of a State may be of one colour, as that of the North-western States is almost purely agricultural, or may contain few persons of education and political knowledge, or may fall under the influence of a demagogue or a clique, or may be possessed by some local passion. Thus its opinion may want breadth, sobriety, wisdom, and the result be seen in imprudent or unjust measures. The latest constitution of California, the Granger legislation of Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, the tampering with their public debts by several States, are familiar instances of follies, to use no harder name, which local opinion approved, but which would have been impossible in the Federal Government, where the controlling opinion is that of a large and complex nation, and where the very deficiences of one section or one class serve to correct qualities which may exist in excess in some other.

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[1] I do not forget the influence exercised on the national mind by the "glittering generalities" of the Declaration of Independence; nor the theoretical grounds taken up for and against States Rights and Slavery, and especially the highly logical scheme excogitated by Calhoun. Nevertheless he who compares the discussion of practical problems in America with the discussion of similar problems in Germany or France, will, I think, agree with the view in the text.

The sentiment of the nation at large, being comparatively remote, acts but slowly in restraining the vagaries or curing the faults of one particular State. The dwellers on the Pacific coast care very little for the criticism of the rest of the country on their anti-Chinese violence; Pensylvania and Virginia disregarded the best opinions of the Union when they dealt with their debts in ways affecting their credit; those parts of the South in which homicide goes unpunished, except by the relatives of the slain, are unmoved by the reproaches and jests of the more peaceable and well-regulated States. The fact shows how deep the division of the country into self-governing commonwealths goes, making men feel that they have a right to do what they will with their own, so long as the power remains to them, whatever may be the purely moral pressure from those who, though they can advise, have no title to interfere. And it shows also, in the teeth of the old doctrine that republicanism was fit for small communities but monarchy necessary for large ones, how much the American democracy gains by trying its experiments with a large people in a vast country.

We may go on to ask how far American opinion succeeds in the simpler duty, which opinion must discharge in all countries, of supervising the conduct of business, and judging the current legislative work which Congress and other legislatures turn out.

Here again the question turns not so much on the excellence of public opinion as on the adequacy of the constitutional machinery provided for its action. That supervision and criticism may be effective, it must be easy to fix the praise for work well done, the blame for work neglected or ill-performed, on particular persons. Experience shows that good men are the better for a sense of their responsibility and ordinary men useless without it. The free governments of Europe and the British colonies have gone on the principle of concentrating power in order to be able to fix responsibility. The American plan of dividing powers, eminent as are its other advantages, makes it hard to fix responsibility. The executive can usually allege that it had not received from the legislature the authority necessary to enable it to grapple with a difficulty; while in the legislature there is no one person or group of persons on whom the blame due for that omission or refusal can be laid. Suppose some gross dereliction of duty to have occurred. The people are indignant. A victim is wanted, who, for the sake of the example to others, ought to be found and punished, either by law or by general censure. But perhaps he cannot be found because out of several persons or bodies who have been concerned it is hard to apportion the guilt and award the penalty. Where the sin lies at the door of Congress, it is not always possible to arraign either the Speaker or the dominant majority, or any particular party leader. Where a State legislature or a city council has misconducted itself, the difficulty is greater, because party ties are less strict there, proceedings are less fully reported, and both parties are apt to be equally implicated in the abuses of private legislation. Not uncommonly there is presented the sight of an exasperated public going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom it may devour, and finding no one. The results in State affairs would be much worse were it not for the existence of the governor with his function of vetoing bills, because in many cases, knowing that he can be made answerable for the passage of a bad measure, he is forced up to the level of a virtue beyond that of the natural man in politics. And the disposition to seek a remedy for municipal misgovernment in increasing the powers of the mayor illustrates the same principle.

Although the failures of public opinion in overseeing the conduct of its servants are primarily due to the want of appropriate machinery, they are increased by its characteristic temper. Quick and strenuous in great matters, it is heedless in small matters, over-kindly and indulgent in all matters. It suffers many weeds to go on growing till they have struck deep root in the soil. It has so much to do in looking after both Congress and its State legislature, a host of executive officials, and perhaps a city council also, that it may impartially tolerate the misdoings of all till some important issue arises. Even when jobs are exposed by the press, each particular job seems below the attention of a busy people or the anger of a good-natured people, till the sum total of jobbery becomes a scandal. To catch and to hold the attention of the people is the chief difficulty as well as the first duty of an American reformer.

The long-suffering tolerance of public opinion towards incompetence and misconduct in officials and public men generally is a feature which has struck recent European observers. It is the more remarkable because nowhere is executive ability more valued in the management of private concerns, in which the stress of competition forces every manager to secure at whatever price the most able subordinates. We may attribute it partly to the good nature of the people, which makes them over lenient to nearly all criminals, partly to the preoccupation with their private affairs of the most energetic and useful men, who therefore cannot spare time to unearth abuses and get rid of offenders, partly to an indifference induced by the fatalistic sentiment which I have already sought to describe. This fatalism acts in two ways. Being optimistic it disposes each man to believe that things will come out right whether he "takes hold" himself or not, and that it is therefore no great matter whether a particular Ring or Boss is suppressed. And in making each individual man feel his insignificance it disposes him to leave to the multitude the task of setting right what is every one else's business just as much as his own. An American does not seem to smart under the same sense of personal wrong from the mismanagement of his public business, from the exaction of high city taxes and their malversation, as an Englishman would in the like case. If he suffers, he suffers with others, as part of the general order of things, which he is no more called upon than his neighbours to correct.

It may be charged as a weak point in the rule of public opinion that by fostering this habit it has chilled activity and dulled the sense of responsibility among the leaders of public life. It has made them less eager and strenuous in striking out ideas and plans of their own, less bold in propounding those plans, more sensitive to the reproach, even more feared in America than in England, of being a crotchet-monger or a doctrinaire. That new or unpopular ideas are more frequently started by isolated thinkers, economists, social reformers, than by statesmen, may be set down to the fact that practical statesmanship indisposes men to theorizing. But in America the practical statesman is apt to be timid in advocacy as well as infertile in suggestion. He seems to be always listening for the popular voice, always afraid to commit himself to a view which may turn out unpopular. It is a fair conjecture that this may be due to his being by his profession a far more habitual worshipper as well as observer of public opinion, than will be the case with men who are by profession thinkers and students, men who are less purely Americans of to-day, because under the influence of the literature of past times as well as of contemporary Europe. Philosophy, taking the word to include the historical study of the forces which work upon mankind at large, is needed by a statesman not only as a consolation for the disappointments of his career, but as a corrective to the superstitions and tremors which the service of the multitude implants.

The enormous force of public opinion is a danger to the people themselves, as well as their leaders. It no longer makes them tyrannical. But it fills them with an undue confidence in their wisdom, their virtue, and their freedom. It may be thought that a nation which uses freedom well can hardly have too much freedom; yet even such a nation may be too much inclined to think freedom an absolute and all-sufficient good, to seek truth only in the voice of the majority, to mistake prosperity for greatness. Such a nation, seeing nothing but its own triumphs, and hearing nothing but its own praises, seems to need a succession of men like the prophets of Israel to rouse the people out of their self-complacency, to refresh their moral ideals, to remind them that the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment, and that to whom much is given of them shall much also be required. If America has no prophets of this order, she fortunately possesses two classes of men who maintain a wholesome irritation such as that which Socrates thought it his function to apply to the Athenian people. These are the instructed critics who exert a growing influence on opinion through the higher newspapers, and by literature generally, and the philanthropic reformers who tell more directly upon the multitude, particularly through the churches. Both classes combined may not as yet be doing all that is needed. But the significant point is that their influence represents not an ebbing but a flowing tide. If the evils they combat exist on a larger scale than in past times, they too are more active and more courageous in rousing and reprehending their fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

WHEREIN PUBLIC OPINION SUCCEEDS

In the examination of the actualities of politics as well as of forms of government, faults are more readily perceived than merits. Everybody is struck by the mistakes which a ruler makes, or by evils which a constitution fails to avert, while less praise than is due may be bestowed in respect of the temptations that have been resisted, or the prudence with which the framers of the government have avoided defects from which other countries suffer. Thus the general prosperity of the United States and the success of their people in all kinds of private enterprises, philanthropic as well as gainful, throws into relief the blemishes of their government, and makes it the more necessary to point out in what respects the power of public opinion overcomes those blemishes, and maintains a high level of good feeling and well-being in the nation.

The European observer of the working of American institutions is apt to sum up his conclusions in two contrasts. One is between the excellence of the Constitution and the vices of the party system that has laid hold of it, discovered its weak points, and brought in a swarm of evils. The Fathers, he says, created the Constitution good, but their successors have sought out many inventions. The other contrast is between the faults of the political class and the merits of the people at large. The men who work the Machine are often selfish and unscrupulous. The people, for whose behoof it purports to be worked, and who suffer themselves to be "run" by the politicians, are honest, intelligent, fair-minded. No such contrast exists anywhere else in the world. Either the politicians are better than they are in America, or the people are worse.

The causes of this contrast, which to many observers has seemed the capital fact of American politics, have been already explained. It brings out the truth, on which too much stress cannot be laid, that the strong point of the American system, the dominant fact of the situation, is the healthiness of public opinion, and the control which it exerts. As Abraham Lincoln said in his famous contest with Douglas, "With public sentiment on its side, everything succeeds; with public sentiment against it, nothing succeeds."

The conscience and common sense of the nation as a whole keep down the evils which have crept into the working of the Constitution, and may in time extinguish them. Public opinion is a sort of atmosphere, fresh, keen, and full of sunlight, like that of the American cities, and this sunlight kills many of those noxious germs which are hatched where politicians congregate That which, varying a once famous phrase, we may call the genius of universal publicity, has some disagreeable results, but the wholesome ones are greater and more numerous. Selfishness, injustice, cruelty, tricks, and jobs of all sorts shun the light; to expose them is to defeat them. No serious evils, no rankling sore in the body politic, can remain long concealed, and when disclosed, it is half destroyed. So long as the opinion of a nation is sound, the main lines of its policy cannot go far wrong, whatever waste of time and money may be incurred in carrying them out. It was observed in the last chapter that opinion is too vague and indeterminate a thing to be capable of considering and selecting the best means for the end on which it has determined. The counterpart of that remark is that the opinion of a whole nation, a united and tolerably homogeneous nation, is, when at last it does express itself, the most competent authority to determine the ends of national policy.[1] In European countries, legislatures and cabinets sometimes take decisions which the nation, which had scarcely thought of the matter till the decision has been taken, is ultimately found to disapprove. In America, men feel that the nation is the only power entitled to say what it wants, and that, till it has manifested its wishes, nothing must be done to commit it. It may sometimes be long in speaking, but when it speaks, it speaks with a weight which the wisest governing class cannot claim.

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[1] The distinction between means and ends is, of course, one which it is hard to draw in practice, because most ends are means to some larger end which embraces them. Still if we understand by ends the main and leading objects of national policy, including the spirit in which the government ought to be administered, we shall find that these are, if sometimes slowly, yet more clearly apprehended in America than in Europe, and less frequently confounded with subordinate and transitory issues.

The frame of the American government has assumed and trusted to the activity of public opinion, not only as the power which must correct and remove the difficulties due to the restrictions imposed on each department, and to possible collisions between them, but as the influence which must supply the defects incidental to a system which works entirely by the machinery of popular elections. Under a system of elections one man's vote is as good as another, the vicious and ignorant have as much weight as the wise and good. A system of elections might be imagined which would provide no security for due deliberation or full discussion, a system which, while democratic in name, recognizing no privilege, and referring everything to the vote of the majority, would in practice be hasty, violent, tyrannical. It is with such a possible democracy that one has to contrast the rule of public opinion as it exists in the United States. Opinion declares itself legally through elections. But opinion is at work at other times also, and has other methods of declaring itself. It secures full discussion of issues of policy and of the characters of men. It suffers nothing to be concealed. It listens patiently to all the arguments that are addressed to it. Eloquence, education, wisdom, the authority derived from experience and high character, tell upon it in the long run, and have, perhaps not always their due influence, but yet a great and growing influence. Thus a democracy governing itself through a constantly active public opinion, and not solely by its intermittent mechanism of elections, tends to become patient, tolerant, reasonable, and is more likely to be unembittered and unvexed by class divisions.

It is the existence of such a public opinion as this, the practice of freely and constantly reading, talking, and judging of public affairs with a view to voting thereon, rather than the mere possession of political rights, that gives to popular government that educative and stimulative power which is so frequently claimed as its highest merit. Those who, in the last generation, were forced to argue for democratic government against oligarchies or despots, were perhaps inclined, if not to exaggerate the value of extended suffrage and a powerful legislature, at least to pass too lightly over the concomitant conditions by whose help such institutions train men to use liberty well. History does not support the doctrine that the mere enjoyment of power fits large masses of men, any more than individuals or classes, for its exercise. Along with that enjoyment there must be found some one or more of various auspicious conditions, such as a direct and fairly equal interest in the common welfare, the presence of a class or group of persons respected and competent to guide, an absence of religious or race hatreds, a high level of education or at least of intelligence, old habits of local self-government, the practice of unlimited free discussion. In America it is not simply the habit of voting but the briskness and breeziness of the whole atmosphere of public life, and the process of obtaining information and discussing it, of hearing and judging each side, that form the citizen's intelligence. True it is that he would not gain much from this process did it not lead up to the exercise of voting power: he would not learn so much on the road did not the polling-booth stand at the end of it. But if it were his lot, as it is that of the masses in some European countries, to exercise his right of suffrage under few of these favouring conditions, the educational value of the vote would become comparatively small. It is the habit of breathing as well as helping to form public opinion that cultivates, develops, trains the average American. It gives him a sense of personal responsibility stronger, because more constant, than exists in those free countries of Europe where he commits his power to a legislature. Sensible that his eye ought to be always fixed on the conduct of affairs, he grows accustomed to read and judge, not indeed profoundly, sometimes erroneously, usually under party influences, but yet with a feeling that the judgment is his own. He has a sense of ownership in the government, and therewith a kind of independence of manner as well as of mind very different from the demissness of the humbler classes of the Old World. And the consciousness of responsibility which goes along with this laudable pride, brings forth the peaceable fruits of moderation. As the Greeks thought that the old families ruled their households more gently than upstarts did, so citizens who have been born to power, born into an atmosphere of legal right and constitutional authority, are sobered by their privileges. Despite their natural quickness and eagerness, the native Americans are politically patient. They are disposed to try soft means first, to expect others to bow to that force of opinion which they themselves recognize. Opposition does not incense them; danger does not, by making them lose their heads, hurry them into precipitate courses. In no country does a beaten minority take a defeat so well. Admitting that the blood of the race counts for something in producing that peculiar coolness and self-control in the midst of an external effervescence of enthusiasm, which is the most distinctive feature of the American masses, the habit of ruling by public opinion and obeying it counts for even more. It was far otherwise in the South before the war, but the South was not a democracy, and its public opinion was that of a passionate class.

The best evidence for this view is to be found in the educative influence of opinion on new-comers. Any one can see how severe a strain is put on democratic institutions by the influx every year of half a million of untrained Europeans, not to speak of those French Canadians who now settle in the north-eastern States. Being in most States admitted to full civic rights before they have come to shake off European notions and habits, these strangers enjoy political power before they either share or are amenable to American opinion. Such immigrants are at first not merely a dead weight in the ship, but a weight which party managers can, in city politics, so shift as to go near upsetting her. They follow blindly leaders of their own race, are not moved by discussion, exercise no judgment of their own. This lasts for some years, probably for the rest of life with those who are elderly when they arrive. But the younger sort, when, if they be foreigners, they have learnt English, when, working among Americans, they have imbibed the sentiments and assimilated the ideas of the country, are thenceforth scarcely to be distinguished from the native population. They are more American than the Americans in their desire to put on the character of their new country. This peculiar gift which the Republic possesses of quickly dissolving and assimilating the foreign bodies that are poured into her mass, imparting to them her own qualities of orderliness, good sense, self-restraint, a willingness to bow to the will of the majority, is mainly due to the all-pervading force of opinion, which the new-comer, so soon as he has formed social and business relations with the natives, breathes in daily till it insensibly transmutes him. Their faith, and a sentiment of resentment against England, keep up among the Irish a body of separate opinion, which for a time resists the solvent power of its American environment. But the public schools finish the work of the factory and the newspapers. The

Irish immigrant's son is an American citizen for all other purposes, even if he retain, which he seldom does, the hereditary Anglophobia.

It is chiefly the faith in publicity that gives to the American public their peculiar buoyancy and what one may call their airy hopefulness in discussing even the weak points of their system. They are always telling you that they have no skeleton closets, nothing to keep back. They know, and are content that all the world should know, the worst as well as the best of themselves. They have a boundless faith in free inquiry and full discussion. They admit the possibility of any number of temporary errors and delusions. But to suppose that a vast nation should, after hearing everything, canvassing everything, and trying all the preliminary experiments it has a mind to, ultimately go wrong by mistaking its own true interests, seems to them a sort of blasphemy against the human intelligence and its Creator.

They claim for opinion that its immense power enables them to get on with but little government. Some evils which the law and its officers are in other countries required to deal with are here averted or cured by the mere force of opinion, which shrivels them up when its rays fall on them. As it is not the product of any one class, and is unwilling to recognize classes at all, for it would stand self-condemned as un-American if it did, it discourages anything in the nature of class legislation. Where a particular section of the people, such, for instance, as the Western farmers or the Eastern operatives, think themselves aggrieved, they complain and clamour for the measures thought likely to help them. The farmers legislated against the railroads, the labour party asks an eight-hour law. But whereas on the European continent such a class would think and act as a class, hostile to other classes, and might resolve to pursue its own objects at whatever risk to the nation, in America national opinion, which every one shares and recognizes as the arbiter, mitigates these feelings, and puts the advocates of the legislation which any class demands upon showing that their schemes are compatible with the paramount interest of the whole community. To say that there is no legislation in America which, like the class legislation of Europe, has thrown undue burdens on the poor, while jealously guarding the pleasures and pockets of the rich, is to say little, because where the middle and poorer citizens have long been a numerical majority, invested with political power, they will evidently take care of themselves. But the opposite danger might have been feared, that the poor would have turned the tables on the rich, thrown the whole burden of taxation upon them, and disregarded in the supposed interest of the masses what are called the rights of property. Not only has this not been attempted—it has been scarcely even suggested (except, of course, by socialists newly arrived from Germany), and it excites no serious apprehension among capitalists. There is nothing in the machinery of government that could do more than delay it for a time, did the masses desire it. What prevents it is the honesty and common-sense of the citizens generally, who are convinced that the interests of all classes are substantially the same, and that justice is the highest of those interests. Equality, open competition, a fair field to everybody, every stimulus to industry, and every security for its fruits, these they hold to be the self-evident principles of national prosperity.

If public opinion is heedless in small things, it usually checks measures which, even if not oppressive, are palpably selfish or unwise. If before a mischievous bill passes, its opponents can get the attention of the people fixed upon it, its chances are slight. All sorts of corrupt or pernicious schemes which are hatched at Washington or in the State legislatures are abandoned because it is felt that the people will not stand them, although they could be easily pushed through those not too scrupulous assemblies. There have been instances of proposals which took people at first by their plausibility, but which the criticism of opinion riddled with its unceasing fire till at last they were quietly dropped. It was in this way that President Grant's attempt to annex San Domingo failed. He had made a treaty for the purpose, which fell through for want of the requisite two-thirds majority in the Senate, but he persisted in the scheme until at last the disapproval of the general public, which had grown stronger by degrees and found expression through the leading newspapers, warned him to desist. After the War, there was at first in many quarters a desire to punish the Southern leaders for what they had made the North suffer. But by degrees the feeling died away, the sober sense of the whole North restraining the passions of those who had counselled vengeance; and, as every one knows, there was never a civil war or rebellion, whichever one is to call it, followed by so few severities.

Public opinion does not always secure the appointment of the best men to places, but where undivided responsibility can be fixed on the appointing authority, it prevents, as those who are behind the scenes know, countless bad appointments for which politicians intrigue. Considering the power of party managers over the Federal executive, and the low sense of honour and public duty as regards patronage among politicians, the leading posts are filled, if not by the most capable men, yet seldom by bad ones. The Federal judges, for instance, are, and have always been, men of high professional standing and stainless character. The same may be, though less generally, said of the upper Federal officials in the North and West. That no similar praise can be bestowed on the exercise of Federal patronage in the southern States since the war, is an illustration of the view I am stating. As the public opinion of the South (that is to say, of the whites who make opinion there) has been steadily hostile to the Republican party, which commanded the executive during the twenty years from 1865 to 1885, the Republican party managers were indifferent to it, because they had nothing to gain or to lose from it. Hence they made appointments without regard to it. Northern opinion knows comparatively little of the details of Southern politics and the character of officials who act there, so that they might hope to escape the censure of their supporters in the North. Hence they jobbed their patronage in the South with unblushing cynicism, using Federal posts there as a means not merely of rewarding party services, but also of providing local white leaders and organizers to the coloured southern Republicans. Their different behaviour here and in the North therefore shows that it has not been public virtue, but the fear of public opinion that has made their Northern appointments on the whole respectable, while those in the South have been so much the reverse. The same phenomenon has been noticed in Great Britain. Jobs are frequent and scandalous in the inverse ratio of the notice they are likely to attract.[1]

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[1] It has often been remarked that posts of the same class are more jobbed by the British executive in Scotland than in England, and in Ireland than in Scotland, because it is harder to rouse Parliament, which in Great Britain discharges much of the function which public opinion discharges in America, to any interest in an appointment made in one of the smaller countries. In Great Britain a minister making a bad appointment has to fear a hostile motion, though Parliament is over lenient to jobs, which may displace him; in the United States a President is under no such apprehension. It is only to opinion that he is responsible.

In questions of foreign policy, opinion is a valuable reserve force. When demonstrations are made by party leaders intended to capture the vote of some particular section, the native Americans only smile. But they watch keenly the language held and acts done by the State Department (Foreign Office), and, while determined to support the President in vindicating the rights of American citizens, would be found ready to check any demand or act going beyond their legal rights which could tend to embroil them with a foreign power. There is still a touch of spread-eagleism and an occasional want of courtesy and taste among public speakers and journalists when they refer to other countries; and there is a determination in all classes to keep European interference at a distance. But among the ordinary native citizens one finds (I think) less obtrusive selfishness, less Chauvinism, less cynicism in declaring one's own national interests to be paramount to those of other states, than in any of the great states of Europe. Justice and equity are more generally recognized as binding upon nations no less than on individuals. Whenever humanity comes into question, the heart of the people is sound. The treatment of the Indians reflects little credit on the Western settlers who have come in contact with them, and almost as little on the Federal Government, whose efforts to protect them have been often foiled by the faults of its own agents, or by its own want of promptitude and foresight. But the wish of the people at large has always been to deal with the aborigines generously as well as uprightly, nor have appeals on their behalf[1] ever failed to command the sympathy and assent of the country.

Throughout these chapters I have been speaking chiefly of the northern States and chiefly of the present, for America is a country which changes fast. But the conduct of the Southern people since their defeat in 1865, illustrates the tendency of underlying national traits to reassert themselves when disturbing conditions have passed away. Before the war the public opinion of the Slave States, and especially of the planting States, was practically the opinion of a class,—the small and comparatively rich landowning aristocracy. The struggle for the defence of their institution had made this opinion fierce and intolerant. To a hatred of the Abolitionists, whom it thought actuated by the wish to rob and humiliate the South, it joined a misplaced contempt for what it deemed the money-grubbing and peace-at-any-price spirit of the Northern people generally. So long as the subjugated States were ruled by arms, and the former "rebels" excluded by disfranchisement from the government of their States, this bitterness remained. When the restoration of self-government, following upon the liberation of the Confederate prisoners and the amnesty, had shown the magnanimity of the North, its clemency, its wish to forget and forgive, its assumption that both sides would shake hands and do their best for their common country, the hearts of the Southern men were conquered. Opinion went round. Frankly, one might almost say cheerfully, it recognized the inevitable. It stopped those outrages on the negroes which the law had been unable to repress. It began to regain "touch" of, it has now almost fused itself with, the opinion of the North and West. No one Southern leader or group can be credited with this: it was the general sentiment of the people that brought it about. Still less do the Northern politicians deserve the praise of the peace-makers, for many among them tried for political purposes to fan or to rekindle the flame of suspicion in the North. It was the opinion of the North generally, more liberal than its guides, which dictated not merely forgiveness, but the restoration of equal civic rights. Nor is this the only case in which the people have proved themselves to have a higher and a truer inspiration than the politicians.

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[1] Such as those so persistently and eloquently made by the late Mrs. Helen Jackson.

It has been observed that the all-subduing power of the popular voice may tell against the appearance of great statesmen by dwarfing aspiring individualities, by teaching men to discover and obey the tendencies of their age rather than rise above them and direct them. If this happens in America it is not because the American people fails to appreciate and follow and exalt such eminent men as fortune bestows upon it. It has a great capacity for loyalty, even for hero-worship. "Our people," said an experienced American publicist to me, "are in reality hungering for great men, and the warmth with which even pinchbeck geniuses, men who have anything showy or taking about them, anything that is deemed to betoken a strong individuality, are followed and glorified in spite of intellectual emptiness, and perhaps even moral shortcomings, is the best proof of the fact." Henry Clay was the darling of his party for many years, as

Jefferson, with less of personal fascination, had been in the preceding generation. Daniel Webster retained the devotion of New England long after it had become clear that his splendid intellect was mated to a far from noble character. A kind of dictatorship was yielded to Abraham Lincoln, whose memory is cherished almost like that of Washington himself. Whenever a man appears with something taking or forcible about him, he becomes the object of so much popular interest and admiration that those cooler heads who perceive his faults, and perhaps dread his laxity of principle, reproach the proneness of their less-discerning countrymen to make an idol out of wood or clay. The career of Andrew Jackson is a case in point, though it may be hoped that the intelligence of the people would estimate such a character more truly to-day than it did sixty years ago. I doubt if there be any country where a really brilliant man, confident in his own strength, and adding the charm of a striking personality to the gift of popular eloquence, would find an easier path to fame and power, and would exert more influence over the minds and emotions of the multitude. Such a man, speaking to the people with the independence of conscious strength, would find himself appreciated and respected.

Controversy is still bitter, more profuse in personal imputations than one expects to find it where there are no grave issues to excuse excitement. But in this respect also there is an improvement. Partisans are reckless, but the mass of the people lends itself less to acrid partisanship than it did in the time of Jackson, or in those first days of the Republic which were so long looked back to as a sort of heroic age. Public opinion grows more temperate, more mellow, and assuredly more tolerant. Its very strength disposes it to bear with opposition or remonstrance. It respects itself too much to wish to silence any voice.

PART V

ILLUSTRATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

[This Part contains some illustrations, drawn from recent American history, of the working of political institutions and public opinion, together with observations on several political questions for which no suitable place could be found in the preceding Parts.]

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

THE PHILADELPHIA GAS RING

PHILADELPHIA, though it has not maintained that primacy among American cities which in the days of the Revolution was secured to it by its population and its central position, is still one of the greatest cities in America, with a population of about a million.[1] The element of recent immigrants is large, if not so large as in New York or Chicago, while the old Quaker character has died out, or remains perceptible only in a certain air of staid respectability which marks the city as compared with the luxury of New York and the tumultuous rush of Chicago. It has of late years been strongly Republican in its politics, partly because that party obtained complete ascendency during the war, partly because Pennsylvania is a Protectionist State, owing to her manufacturing industries, and Philadelphia, as the stronghold of protection, is attached to the party which upholds those doctrines. During the Civil War the best citizens were busily absorbed in its great issues, and both then and for some time after, welcomed all the help that could be given to their party by any men who knew how to organize the voters and bring them up to the polls; while at the same time their keen interest in national questions made them inattentive to municipal affairs. Accordingly the local control and management of the party fell into the hands of obscure citizens, men who had their own ends to serve, their own fortunes to make, but who were valuable to the party because they kept it in power through their assiduous work among the lower class of voters. These local leaders formed combinations with party managers in the State legislature which sits at Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, and with a clique managed from Washington by a well-known senatorial family, which for a long time controlled the Pennsylvania vote in

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[1] In 1880 it was 847,170.

Republican national conventions and in Congress. They were therefore strongly entrenched, having powerful allies, both in State politics and in Federal politics. Since they commanded the city vote, both these sets of politicians were obliged to conciliate them; while the commercial interests of Philadelphia in the maintenance of a protective tariff pressed so strongly on the minds of her leading merchants and manufacturers as to make them unwilling to weaken the Republican party in either State or city by any quarrel with those who commanded the bulk of its heavy vote.

The obscure citizens of whom I have spoken had begun by acquiring influence in the primaries, and then laid their hands on the minor, ultimately also on the more important, city offices. They sometimes placed men of good social standing in the higher posts, but filled the inferior ones, which were very numerous, with their own creatures. The water department, the highway department, the tax department, the city treasurer's department, the county commissioner's office, fell into their hands. A mayor appointed by them filled the police with their henchmen till it became a completely partisan force. But the centre of their power was the Gas Trust, administered by trustees, one of whom, by his superior activity and intelligence, secured the command of the whole party machinery, and reached the high position of recognized Boss of Philadelphia. This gentleman, Mr. James M'Manes, having gained influence among the humbler voters, was appointed one of the Gas Trustees, and soon managed to bring the whole of that department under his control. It employed (I was told) about two thousand persons, received large sums, and gave out large contracts. Appointing his friends and dependants to the chief places under the Trust, and requiring them to fill the ranks of its ordinary workmen with persons on whom they could rely, the Boss acquired the control of a considerable number of votes and of a large annual revenue. He and his confederates then purchased a controlling interest in the principal horse-car (street tramway) company of the city, whereby they became masters of a large number of additional voters. All these voters were of course expected to act as "workers," *i.e.* they occupied themselves with the party organization of the city, they knew the meanest streets and those who dwelt therein, they attended and swayed the primaries, and when an election came round, they canvassed and brought up the voters. Their power, therefore, went far beyond their mere voting strength, for a hundred energetic "workers" mean at least a thousand votes. With so much strength behind them the Gas Ring, and Mr. M'Manes at its head, became not merely indispensable to the Republican party in the city, but in fact its chiefs, able therefore to dispose of the votes of all those who were employed permanently or temporarily in the other departments of the city government—a number which one hears estimated as high as twenty thousand.[1] Nearly all the municipal offices were held by their nominees. They commanded a majority in the Select council and Common council. They managed the nomination of members of the State legislature. Even the Federal officials in the custom-house and post-office were forced into a dependent alliance with them, because their support was so valuable to the leaders in Federal politics that it had to be purchased by giving them their way in city affairs. There was no getting at the Trust, because "its meetings were held in secret, its published annual report to the city councils was confused and unintelligible, and (as was subsequently proved) actually falsified."[2] Mr. M'Manes held the pay rolls under lock and key, so that no one could know how many employés there were, and it was open to him to increase their number to any extent. The city councils might indeed ask for information, but he was careful to fill the city councils with his nominees, and to keep them in good humour by a share of whatever spoil there might be, and still more by a share of the patronage.

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[1] The ballot does not seem to have protected these voters; one is told that it is generally possible for the presiding election officer to know how each man votes, if he desires, in the interest of his party, to do so.

[2] See *Report of the Committee of One Hundred*, published November 1884. A leading citizen of Philadelphia, from whom I have sought an explanation of the way in which the Gas Trust had managed to entrench itself, writes me as follows:—"When in 1835 gas was first introduced in Philadelphia, it was manufactured by a private company, but the city reserved the right to buy out the stockholders. When this was done, in 1841, with the object of keeping the works 'out of politics,' the control was vested in a board of twelve, each serving for three years. These were constituted trustees of the loans issued for the construction and enlargement of the works. Their appointment was lodged in the hands of the city councils; but when, on more than one occasion, the councils endeavoured to obtain control of the works, the courts were appealed to and decided that the board, as trustees for the bondholders, could not be interfered with until the last of the bonds issued under this arrangement had matured and had been paid off. Thirty-year loans under these conditions were issued until 1855, so that it was not until 1885 that the city was able to break within the charmed circle of the Trust."

That so vast and solid an edifice of power, covering the whole of a great city, should be based on the control of a single department like the Gas Trust may excite surprise. But it must be remembered that when a number of small factions combine to rule a party, that faction which is a little larger, or better organized, or better provided with funds, than the others, obtains the first place among them, and may keep it so long as it gives to the rest a fair share of the booty, and directs the policy of the confederates with firmness and skill. Personal capacity, courage, resolution, foresight, the judicious preference of the substance of power to its display, are qualities whose union in one brain is so uncommon in any group of men that their possessor acquires an ascendency which lasts until he provokes a revolt by oppression, or is seen to be leading his party astray. And by the admission even of his enemies, Mr. M'Manes possessed these qualities. His origin was humble, his education scanty, but he atoned for these deficiencies by tact and knowledge of the world, with a quietly decorous demeanour veiling an imperious will. He knew how to rule without challenging opposition by the obtrusion of his own personality, nor does he seem to have used his power to plunder the city for his own behoof. The merit of the system was that it perpetuated itself, and in fact grew stronger the longer it stood. Whenever an election was in prospect the ward primaries of the Republican party were thronged by the officers and workpeople of the Gas Trust and other city departments, who secured the choice of such delegates as the Ring had previously selected in secret conclave. Sometimes, especially in the wards inhabited by the better sort of citizens, this "official list" of delegates was resisted by independent men belonging to the Republican party; but as the chairman was always in the interest of the Ring, he rarely failed so to jockey these Independents that even if they happened to have the majority present they could not carry their men. Of course it seldom happened that they could bring a majority with them, while argument would have been wasted on the crowd of employés and their friends with which the room was filled, and who were bound, some by the tenure of their office, others by the hope of getting office or work, to execute the behests of their political masters. The delegates chosen were usually office-holders, with a sprinkling of public works contractors, liquor-dealers, always a potent factor in ward politics, and office expectants. For instance, the

Convention of 13th January 1881, for nominating a candidate for mayor, consisted of 199 delegates, 86 of whom were connected with some branch of the city government, 9 were members of the city councils, 5 were police magistrates, 4 constables, and 23 policemen, while of the rest some were employed in some other city department, and some others were the known associates and dependants of the Ring. These delegates, assembled in convention of the party, duly went through the farce of selecting and voting for persons already determined on by the Ring as candidates for the chief offices. The persons so selected thereby became the authorized candidates of the party, for whom every good party man was expected to give his vote. Disgusted he might be to find a person unknown, or known only for evil, perhaps a fraudulent bankrupt, or a broken-down barkeeper, proposed for his acceptance, but his only alternative being to vote for the Democratic nominee, who was probably no better, he submitted, and thus the party was forced to ratify the choice of the Boss. The possession of the great city offices gave the members of the Ring the means not only of making their own fortunes, but of amassing a large reserve fund to be used for "campaign purposes." Many of these offices were paid by fees and not by salary. Five officers were at one time in the receipt of an aggregate of $223,000 (£44,600), or an average of $44,600 each (£8900). One, the collector of delinquent taxes, received nearly $200,000 a year. Many others had the opportunity, by giving out contracts for public works on which they received large commissions, of enriching themselves almost without limit, because there was practically no investigation of their accounts.[1] The individual official was of course required to contribute to the secret party funds in proportion to his income, and while he paid in thousands of dollars from his vast private gains, assessments were levied on the minor employés down to the very policemen. On one occasion each member of the police force was required to pay $25, and some afterwards a further tax of $10, for party purposes. Any one who refused, and much more of course any one who asserted his right to vote as he pleased, was promptly dismissed. The fund was spent in what is called "fixing things up," in canvassing, in petty bribery, in keeping bar-rooms open and supplying drink to the workers who resort thither, and, at election times, in bringing in armies of professional personators and repeaters from Washington, Baltimore, and other neighbouring cities, to swell the vote for the Ring nominees. These men, some of them, it is said, criminals, others servants in the Government departments in the national capital, could of course have effected little if the election officials and the police had looked sharply after them. But those who presided at the voting places were mostly in the plot, being Ring men and largely city employés, while the police—and herein not less than in their voting power lies the value of a partisan police—had instructions not to interfere with the strangers, but allow them to vote as often as they please, while hustling away keen-eyed opponents.[1]

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[1] In the suit subsequently instituted against the gas trustees, it was shown that in six years the trust had in cash losses, illegal transactions, and manufacturing losses due to corrupt management, involved the city in an expense of three and a half millions of dollars (about £700,000). These were the figures so far as ascertained in November 1884.—*Report of the Committee of One Hundred*, p. ii.

This kind of electioneering is costly, for secrecy must be well paid for, and in other ways also the Ring was obliged to spend heavily. Regarding each municipal department chiefly as a means of accumulating subservient electors, it was always tempted to "create new voting-stock" (to use the technical expression), *i.e.* to appoint additional employés. This meant additional salaries, so the tax-payers had the satisfaction of knowing that the sums they paid went to rivet on their necks the yoke of the bosses, just as a Greek tyrant exacted from the citizens money to hire the mercenaries who garrisoned the Acropolis. And there was of course a vast deal of peculation in nearly all the departments; because clerks who had it in their power to disclose damaging secrets had little to fear, either from a superior or from the councilmen who had procured their appointment. Thus the debt of the city rose rapidly. In 1860 it stood at about $20,000,000 (£4,000,000). In 1881 it had reached $70,000,000 (£14,000,000). Taxation rose in proportion, till in 1881 it amounted to between one-fourth and one-third of the net income from the property on which it was assessed, although that property was rated at nearly its full value.[2] Yet withal the city was badly paved, badly cleansed, badly supplied with gas (for which a high price was charged), and with water.[1] That such a burden should have been borne, with so little to show for it, was all the more surprising, because in Philadelphia there is a larger number of well-to-do working-people, owning the houses they lived in, than in any other city of the Union.[2] It might have been expected, therefore, that since the evils of heavy rating and bad administration pressed directly on an unusually large number of electors, the discontent would have been universal, the demand for reform overwhelming.[3]

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[1] A policeman is by law forbidden to approach within thirty feet of the voter. Who was to see that the law was observed when the guardians of the law broke it? According to the proverb, If water chokes, what is one to drink next?

[2] I take these facts from an interesting paper on the *Form of Municipal Government for Philadelphia*, by Mr. John C. Bullit. Philadelphia, 1882.

But how was reform to be effected? Three methods presented themselves. One was to proceed against the Gas Trustees and other peculators in the courts of the State. But to make out a case the facts must first be ascertained, the accounts examined. Now the city departments did not publish all their accounts, or published them in a misleading and incomplete form. The powers which should have scrutinized them and compelled a fuller disclosure, were vested in the councils of the city, acting by their standing committees. But these councils were mainly composed of members or nominees of the Ring, who had a direct interest in suppressing inquiry, because they either shared the profits of dishonesty, or had placed their own relatives and friends in municipal employment by bargains with the peculating heads of departments. They therefore refused to move, and voted down the proposals for investigation made by a few of their more public-spirited colleagues.[4]

Another method was to turn out the corrupt officials at the next election. The American system of short terms and popular elections was originally due to a distrust of the officials, and expressly designed to enable the people to recall misused powers. The astuteness of professional politicians had, however, made it unavailable. Good citizens could not hope to carry candidates of their own against the tainted nominees of the Ring, because the latter having the "straight" or "regular" party nominations would command the vote of the great mass of ordinary party men, so that the only effect of voting against them would at best be to let in the candidates of the opposite, *i.e.* the Democratic, party. Those candidates were usually no better than the Republican Ring nominees, so where was the gain? And the same reason, joined to party hostility, forbade good Republicans to vote for Democratic candidates. The Democrats, to be sure, might have taken advantage of Republican discontent by nominating really good men, who would in that case have been carried by the addition of the Republican "bolting" vote to the regular Democratic vote. But the Democratic wire-pullers, being mostly men of the same stamp as the Gas Ring, did not seek a temporary gain at the expense of a permanent disparagement of their own class. Political principles are the last thing which the professional city politician cares for. It was better worth the while of the Democratic chiefs to wait for their turn, and in the meantime to get something out of occasional bargains with their (nominal) Republican opponents, than to strengthen the cause of good government at the expense of the professional class.[1]

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[1] See Chapter LI. p. 606 of Vol. I.

[2] There are in Philadelphia 90,000 individual owners of real estate, constituting more than a majority of all the votes ever cast in an election.

[3] During a considerable part of the time the enormous annual expenditure for "city improvements" was defrayed out of fresh loans, so the citizens did not realize the burden that was being laid on them.

[4] A friend in Philadelphia writes me—"It might be thought that the power of election vested in the councils would enable the latter to control the trustees, but when 'politics' invaded the trust, a vicious circle speedily established itself, and the trust controlled the councils. Its enormous pay-roll enabled it to employ numerous 'workers' in each of the 600 or 700 election divisions of the city, and aspirants for seats in the councils found it almost impossible to obtain either nomination or election without the favour of the trust. Thus the councils became filled with its henchmen or 'heelers,' submissive to its bidding, not only in the selection of trustees to fill the four yearly vacancies, but in every detail of city government with which the leaders of the trust desired to interfere. It is easy to understand the enormous possibilities of power created by such a position."

The third avenue to reform lay through the action of the State legislature. It might have ordered an inquiry into the municipal government of Philadelphia, or passed a statute providing for the creation of a better system. But this avenue was closed even more completely than the other two by the control which the City Ring exercised over the State legislature. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives was notoriously a tainted body, and the Senate no better, or perhaps, as some think, worse. The Philadelphia politicians, partly by their command of the Philadelphia members, partly by the other inducements at their command, were able to stop all proceedings in the legislature hostile to themselves, and did in fact, as will appear presently, frequently balk the efforts which the reformers made in that quarter. It was enough for their purpose to command one House; indeed, it was practically enough to command the committee of that one House to which a measure is referred. The facilities for delay are such that a reforming bill can be stifled without the need of open opposition.

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[1] It was generally believed in February 1881 that the Democratic bosses had made a bargain (for valuable consideration) with the Gas Ring not to nominate Mr. Hunter, the reformers' candidate, for the receivership of taxes.

This was the condition of the Quaker City with its 850,000 people; these the difficulties reformers had to encounter. Let us see how they proceeded.

In 1870, a bill was passed by the State legislature at Harrisburg, at the instigation of the City Ring, then in the first flush of youthful hope and energy, creating a Public Buildings Commission for the city of Philadelphia, a body with an unlimited term of office, with power to enlarge its numbers, and fill up vacancies among its members, to tax the city and to spend the revenue so raised on buildings, practically without restriction or supervision. When this Act, which had been passed in one day through both Houses, without having been even printed, came to the knowledge of the better class of citizens, alarm arose, and an agitation was set on foot for its abrogation. A public meeting was held in March 1871, a committee formed, with instructions to proceed to Harrisburg, and have the Act repealed. The committee went to Harrisburg and urged members of both Houses to support a repealing bill introduced into the State Senate. In May this bill passed the Senate, in which there was then a Democratic majority, five Republican members voting for it. However, a committee of the (Republican) House of Representatives reported against the repeal, influenced by interested persons from Philadelphia, and (as is generally believed) influenced by arguments weightier than words; so the Commission was maintained in force. The incident had, however, so far roused a few of the better class of Republicans, that they formed a Municipal Reform Association, whose career has been summarized for me by an eminent citizen of Philadelphia, in the words which follow:—

"The Association laboured earnestly to check the tide of misgovernment. Its task was a difficult one, for the passions aroused by the war were still vigorous, the reconstruction in progress in the South kept partisanship at a white heat, and fealty to party obligations was regarded as a sacred duty by nearly all classes. Consequently it had no newspaper support to depend upon, and as a rule it met with opposition from the leaders of both political organizations. Moreover, the laws regulating the registry of voters and the conduct of elections had been so framed as to render fraud easy and detection difficult. Undeterred by these obstacles, the Association set itself vigorously to work; it held public meetings, it issued addresses and tracts, it placed tickets in the field consisting of the better candidates of either party, and when neither had made passable nominations for an office it put forward those of its own. It continued in active existence for three or four years, and accomplished much of what it set out to do. Occasionally it succeeded in defeating specially objectionable candidates, and in electing better men to the city councils; the increase in the public debt was checked, the credit of the city was improved, and economy began to be practised in some of the departments; salaries were substituted for fees in the public offices; the election laws were revised and honest elections became possible; prosecutions were instituted against offenders, and enough convictions were secured to serve as a wholesome warning. The services of the Association were especially apparent in two directions. It contributed largely to the agitations which secured the calling of a convention in 1873 to revise the State constitution, it had a salutary influence with the convention, and it aided in obtaining the ratification of the new constitution by the people. Still more important was its success in arousing the public conscience, and in training a class of independent voters who gradually learned to cast their ballots without regard to so-called party fealty. It thus opened the way for all subsequent reforms, and when its members, wearied with its thankless task, one by one withdrew, and the Association disbanded, they could feel that not only was the condition of the city materially improved, but that their successors in the Sisyphæan labour would have a lighter burden and a less rugged ascent to climb. One important result of the attention which they had drawn to municipal mismanagement was the passage of an act of legislature, under which, in 1877, the governor of the State appointed a commission of eleven persons to devise a plan for the government of cities. This commission made a report proposing valuable improvements, and submitted it, with a bill embodying their suggestions, to the State legislature in 1878. The legislature, however, at the bidding of the Rings, for Pittsburg and other cities have their Rings as well as Philadelphia, smothered the bill, and all efforts to pass it failed till 1885."

In the course of 1880, the horizon began to clear.[1] Several honest and outspoken men who had found their way into the two councils of the city, denounced the prevailing corruption, and by demands of inquiry began to rouse the citizens. A correspondent of a New York paper obtained facts about the management of the Gas Trust which, when published, told seriously on opinion. At the November election, while Philadelphia cast a heavy vote in favour of General Garfield as Republican candidate for the Presidency, and for the Republican nominees for the offices of State Auditor-General, and judge of the State Supreme Court, she returned as City Controller a young Democrat, who having, with the help of the Municipal Reform Association, found his way into that office at the last preceding election, had signalized himself by uprightness and independence. The Republican bosses did their utmost against him, but the vote of independents among the Republicans, joined to that of the Democratic party (whose bosses, although secretly displeased with his conduct, did not openly throw him over), carried him in. Thirteen days afterwards, under the impulse of this struggle, an energetic citizen convened a meeting of leading merchants to set on foot a movement for choosing good men at the elections due in February 1881. This meeting created a committee of one hundred business men, including a large number of persons bearing the oldest and most respected names in Philadelphia. All were Republicans, and at first they endeavoured to effect their purposes by means, and within the limits, of the Republican party. They prepared a declaration of principle, containing their programme of municipal reform, and resolved to support no candidate who would not sign it. Soon the time came for making nominations for the three offices to be filled up, viz. those of mayor, receiver of taxes, and city solicitor. For mayor, the "regular" Republican party, controlled by Mr. M'Manes, nominated Mr. Stokley, who was then in office, a man against whom no fraud could be charged, but whose management of the police force and subservience to the Boss had made him suspected by earnest reformers. At first, in the belief that he was prepared to subscribe their declaration, the One Hundred gave him their nomination; but when it turned out that he, influenced by the Ring, refused to do so, they withdrew their "indorsement," and perceived that the time had come for a bolder course. Since they must resist the Ring Republicans, they invited the co-operation of the Democratic party in choosing a good man. The novelty of the circumstances, and the opportunity of doing a good stroke for their party and their city at once, brought to the front the best element among the Democrats. Overruling their bosses by a sudden movement, the Democratic convention nominated Mr. King for the mayoralty, a bold and honest man, whom, though a Democrat, the committee of One Hundred promptly accepted. For the not less important office of receiver of taxes, the One Hundred had nominated Mr. Hunter, a Republican, who had approved his public spirit by upright service in the common council. The Ring Republicans had taken for their candidate an unknown man, supposed to be a creature of Mr. M'Manes; and everything now turned on the conduct of the Democratic nominating convention. It was strongly urged by the feeling of the people to accept Mr. Hunter. But the Democratic bosses had no mind to help a reformer, and even among the better men, the old dislike to supporting a person belonging to the opposite party was strong. A passionate struggle in the Democratic convention, round whose doors a vast and eager crowd had gathered, resulted in the carrying by a small majority of a regular party candidate named M'Grath against Mr. Hunter. Thereupon the delegates who supported Hunter seceded, and marched, escorted and cheered by excited crowds, to the rooms of the One Hundred, where they organized themselves afresh as an Independent convention, and nominated Hunter. Immense enthusiasm was evoked in both parties by this novel and unexpectedly bold action. Independent Democrats organized clubs and committees in Hunter's cause, and the movement spread so fast that ten days before the election, M'Grath retired, leaving the regular Democrats free to cast their votes for the Republican Hunter, along with the Democratic King. Only one chance was now left to the Gas Ring—the lavish expenditure of money, and the resort to election frauds. They assessed the police, about 1300 in number, \$20 a head (£4) to replenish the campaign fund, levying assessments on the other city departments also. Preparations for repeating and ballot box stuffing were made as in former days, but the energy of the One Hundred, who, while they issued a circular to clergymen of all denominations requesting them to preach sermons on the duty of electors, issued also notices threatening prosecution against any one guilty of an election fraud, and organized a large force of volunteer citizens to look after the police, so much frightened the Ringsters and their dependants, that the voting was conducted with fairness and purity. The excitement on the polling day was unprecedented in municipal politics, and the success of the reform candidates who were chosen, King by a majority of six thousand, Hunter by twenty thousand, was welcomed with transports of joy. Astræa had returned—the "City of Independence" was again a city of freedom.

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[1] In the narrative which follows I have derived much assistance from a little book by Mr. George Vickers, entitled *The Fall of Bossism* (Philadelphia, 1883) which, with some oddities of style, contains a great many instructive details of the doings of the Bosses and the Reform Campaign. Some information as to Ring methods in Philadelphia may also be gathered from a lively satire published anonymously, entitled *Solid for Mulhooly* (New York, 1881).

The committee of One Hundred, to whose efforts the victory was mainly due, was kept on foot to carry on and perfect the work of reform. It recommended candidates at the spring and fall elections during the three years that followed, obtaining for them a measure of success encouraging, no doubt, yet less complete than had been expected. It retained counsel to aid in a suit instituted against the Gas Trustees, which resulted in disclosing scandalous waste and fraud, and has led to a great improvement in the management of that department. It induced the State legislature to reduce the salaries of a number of overpaid officials, and to place on a permanent basis the salaries of judges which had hitherto been voted annually. The Mayor, whom it had carried in 1881, stopped the assessment of the police for "campaign purposes," and rigidly restrained them from joining in the nominating conventions or interfering with voters at the polls. The tax office was reorganized by the new Receiver, and the income which its employés depleted turned into the city treasury. The system of banking city monies, which had been used for political purposes, was reformed under an ordinance of the city councils, secured by the efforts of the committee. The lists of voters, which had been carelessly and sometimes corruptly made up, were set to rights, and capable men appointed assessors instead of the ward politicians, often illiterate, to whom this duty had been previously entrusted. An inspector of highways was engaged by the committee to report cases in which contractors were failing to do the work in repairing streets and drains for which they were paid, and frauds were unearthed by which the city had been robbed of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Gross abuses in the management of the city almshouse and hospital were revealed; a new administration was installed, which in its first year saved the city $80,000 (£16,000); while the conviction and imprisonment of the chief offenders struck wholesome terror into evil-doers in other departments. Finally, the committee undertook the prosecution of a large number of persons accused of fraud, repeating, personation, violence, tampering with ballot boxes, and other election offences, and by convicting some and driving others from the city, so much reduced these misdemeanours that in the end of 1883 the city elections were pronounced to show a clean bill of health.[1]

Work so various and so difficult cost the members of the committee of One Hundred, who were nearly all men actively engaged in business, and had passed a self-denying ordinance binding themselves to accept no personal political advantage, an infinitude of time and trouble. Accordingly, when they found that the candidates, whom they had recommended at the election of February 1884, had been rejected in favour of other candidates, who made similar professions of reform, but seemed less likely, from their past history, to fulfil those professions, they determined to wind up and dissolve the committee. It had done great things, and its failure to carry its candidates at this last election was due partly to the intrusion into municipal politics of the national issue of the protective tariff (the most burning of all questions to Philadelphians), partly to that languor which creeps over voters who fancy that by doing their duty strenuously for some years they have mortally wounded the power of corruption and need not keep up the fight till it is stone dead.

A very recent writer sums up the situation thus: "The committee of One Hundred fought the Ring at every point and at all points for city and county officers, the council, and the legislature, the plan being to unite for the nominations of the two great parties and endorse one or the other of the candidates, or even nominate candidates of their own. They sent tickets to every citizen, and created the class of 'vest-pocket voters'—men who come to the polls with their tickets made up, to the confusion of 'the boys.' They changed for a while the complexion of councils, elected a reform mayor and receiver of taxes, caused the repeal of the infamous Delinquent Tax Collections Bill, and the equally notorious and obnoxious Recorder's Bill, and generally made a more decent observance of the law necessary throughout the city. In its nature, however, the remedy was esoteric and revolutionary, and therefore necessarily ephemeral. It could not retain the spoils system and thereby attract the workers. Its candidates, when elected, often betrayed it and went over to the regulars, who, they foresaw, had more staying qualities. Its members became tired of the thankless task of spending time and money in what must be a continuous, unending battle. The people became restive, and refused their support to what jarred on their conservative ideas, and what they were pleased to call the dictation of an autocratic, self-constituted body. The cry was raised : 'Who made thee a ruler and judge over us ?'

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[1] The committee observe in the Report that the party organization of the city, in nearly every instance, did its utmost by supplying bail, employing counsel, and rendering other assistance to protect the culprits, who were regarded as sufferers for the sake of their party.

"In 1883 the committee's candidate for controller was defeated in a pitched battle, and the following spring the reform mayor was beaten by over 7000 votes by the most advanced type of a machine politician, who has since been impeached by his own party in Common Council for pecuniary malfeasance, and only saved by the postponement of trial under dictation of the leaders who are now enjoying an apparently complete restoration."[1]

The above extract was written in 1883. Since that year there have been changes for the better in the city administration of Philadelphia. A bill for reforming municipal government by the enactment of a new city charter, prepared by a committee which included some leading citizens, and approved by the One Hundred, came before the State legislature in 1883. It was there smothered by the professionals at the instance of the Gas Ring. When it reappeared in the legislature of 1885 circumstances were more favourable. The relations between the State Boss of Pennsylvania and the City Ring headed by Boss M'Manes were strained. The State Boss seems, while wishing to cripple the City Ring by cutting off some of its patronage, to have thought that it would be well to conciliate the good citizens of Philadelphia by giving his powerful support to a reform measure. He was the more drawn to this course because the Mayor of Philadelphia, whose appointing power would be enlarged by the bill (called from its draftsman the Bullit Bill), was, although not a "high-class politician," far from friendly to the Gas Trust. Long discussions of the Bullit Bill in the press and at meetings had produced some effect even on the State legislature at Harrisburg ; nor was there wanting in that body a small section of good members willing to help reform forward. Many leaders and most newspapers had in the course of the discussions been led to commit themselves to an approval of the bill, while not expecting it to pass. Thus in 1885 the opposition in the legislature ceased to be open and direct, and came to turn on the question when the bill, if passed, should take effect. Its promoters prudently agreed to let its operation be delayed till 1887; and having thus "squared" some of their opponents, and out-manœuvred others, they ran it through. Public opinion and a righteous cause counted for something in this triumph, but even public opinion and righteousness might have failed but for the feud between Mr. M'Manes and the State Boss.

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[1] Mr. E. P. Allinson and Mr. B. Penrose, in their article (which I have received since writing this chapter) on "City Government in Philadelphia."

It is still too soon to estimate the results attained under the new City Charter thus enacted. The first occupant of the mayoralty, an office whose powers are greatly increased, does not seem to have done his best to make it succeed: but on the whole a great and probably permanent advance is believed to have been secured. Whether Philadelphia shall be well governed in future will chiefly depend on the energy and public spirit which her citizens from time to time show in the choice of strong and upright mayors.

The European reader will probably have found three things surprising in the foregoing narrative—the long-suffering of the tax-payers under fraud and extortion up till 1881; the strength of party loyalty, even in municipal affairs where no political principle is involved; and—it is a consequence of the two former—the extraordinary efforts required to induce the voters to protect their pockets by turning a gang of plunderers out of office. An attempt to explain the general causes of these phenomena has been made in preceding chapters. With regard to the last it may be observed that the existence of universal suffrage in a city of 900,000 people imposes a vast amount of work on those who would win an election. Nothing but a very complete and very active ward organization, an organization which knows every house in every street, and drops upon the new voter from Ireland or Germany as soon as residence and the oath have made him a citizen, can grapple with the work of bringing up these multitudes to the poll. It was their command of this local organization, their practice in working it, the fact that their employés were a trained and disciplined body whose chief business was to work it—services in the gas or water or some other department being a mere excuse for paying the "workers" a salary—that gave the Gas Ring and its astute head a hold upon the voting power of the city, which all the best Republicans, with frequent aid from the Democrats, found it hard to shake and have not yet wholly destroyed.

The moral of the whole story is, however, best given in the words of two eminent Philadelphians.

One of them writes me as follows:—

> "Those who study these questions most critically and think the most carefully fear more for the Republic from the indifference of the better classes than the ignorance of the lower classes. We hear endless talk about the power of the Labour vote, the Irish vote, the German vote, the Granger vote, but no combination at the ballot box to-day is as numerous or powerful as the stay-at-home vote. The sceptre which is stronger to command than any other is passed by unnoticed, not because outworn in conflict, but because rusted and wasted in neglect. The Knights of Labour claim a membership of 1,000,000. The entire foreign-born vote is about 1,200,000, but the stay-at-home vote, or don't vote, in 1880 was 4,000,000. Then it must be remembered that the primary, the caucus, and the convention are the real rulers of America, and the hand which guides these is the master. Here again the stay-at-home vote is still more responsible. In New York City in 1885 there were 266,000 voters; of these 201,000 voted at the regular election, and between 20,000 and 25,000 voted at the primary. This proportion would hold good the country over, and it appears that one out of every four does not vote at all, and nine out of every ten do not attend the primaries. It can therefore easily be seen that it is very easy to control the primaries, and granting strong party fealty how difficult it is to run an independent ticket against the machine."

The other, Mr. Henry C. Lea, the distinguished historian, says—

> "Your expression of surprise at the mal-administration of Philadelphia is thoroughly justified. In existing social conditions it would be difficult to conceive of a large community of which it would appear more safe to predicate judicious self-government than ours. Nowhere is there to be found a more general diffusion of property or a higher average standard of comfort and intelligence—nowhere so large a proportion of landowners bearing the burden of direct taxation, and personally interested in the wise and honest expenditure of the public revenue. In these respects it is almost an ideal community in which to work out practical results from democratic theories. I have often speculated as to the causes of failure without satisfying myself with any solution. It is not attributable to manhood suffrage, for in my reform labours I have found that the most dangerous enemies of reform have not been the ignorant and poor but men of wealth, of high social position and character, who had nothing personally to gain from political corruption, but who showed themselves as unfitted to exercise the right of suffrage as the lowest proletariat, by allowing their partisanship to enlist them in the support of candidates

notoriously bad who happened by control of party machinery to obtain the 'regular' nominations.

"The nearest approach which I can make to an explanation is that the spirit of party blinds many, while still more are governed by the mental inertia which renders independent thought the most laborious of tasks, and the selfish indolence which shrinks from interrupting the daily routine of avocations. In a constituency so enormous the most prolonged and strenuous effort is required to oppose the ponderous and complicated machinery of party organization, which is always in the hands of professional politicians who obtain control over it by a process of natural selection, and who thus are perfectly fitted for the work. Recalcitrants are raw militia who take the field with overwhelming odds against them, both in numbers and discipline. Even though they may gain an occasional victory, their enthusiasm exhausts itself and they return to more congenial labours, while the 'regular' is always on duty, and knows, with Philip II., that Time and he can overcome any other two."

Philadelphia has just erected a magnificent city hall, the largest and finest building of its kind in the United States, with a tower, 537 feet in height, which far overtops Cologne Cathedral and the Pyramid of Cheops and St. Peter's at Rome. It is to be hoped that under the new scheme of city government, and after the painful lessons of the past, the officials who reign in this municipal palace will be found worthy of so superb a dwelling and of the city where the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution first saw the light.

CHAPTER LXXXIX

KEARNEYISM IN CALIFORNIA

I. The Character of California

What America is to Europe, what Western America is to Eastern, that California is to the other Western States. The characteristics of a new and quickly developed colonial civilization are all strongly marked. It is thoroughly American, but most so in those points wherein the Old World differs from the New. Large fortunes are swiftly made and not less swiftly spent. Changes of public sentiment are sudden and violent. The most active minds are too much absorbed in great business enterprises to attend to politics; the inferior men are frequently reckless and irresponsible; the masses are impatient, accustomed to blame everything and everybody but themselves for the slow approach of the millennium, ready to try instant, even if perilous, remedies for a present evil.

These features belong more or less to all the newer and rougher commonwealths. Several others are peculiar to California—a State on which I dwell the more willingly because it is in many respects the most striking in the whole Union, and has more than any other the character of a great country, capable of standing alone in the world. It has immense wealth in its fertile soil as well as in its minerals and forests. Nature is nowhere more imposing nor her beauties more varied.

It grew up, after the cession by Mexico and the discovery of gold, like a gourd in the night. A great population had gathered before there was any regular government to keep it in order, much less any education or social culture to refine it. The wildness of that time passed into the blood of the people, and has left them more tolerant of violent deeds, more prone to interferences with or supersessions of regular law, than are the people of most parts of the Union.

The chief occupation of the first generation of Californians was mining, an industry which is like gambling in its influence on the character, with its sudden alternations of wealth and poverty, its long hours of painful toil relieved by bouts of drinking and merriment, its life in a crowd of men who have come together from the four winds of heaven, and will scatter again as soon as some are enriched and others ruined, or the gold in the gulch is exhausted. Moreover, mining in this region means gambling, not only in camps among the miners, but among townsfolk in the shares of the mining companies. Californians of all classes have formed the habit of buying and selling in the mining exchanges, with effects on the popular temper both in business and in politics which every one can understand. Speculation becomes a passion, patient industry is distasteful; there is bred a recklessness and turbulence in the inner life of the man which does not fail to express itself in acts.

When California was ceded to the United States, land speculators bought up large tracts under Spanish titles, and others, foreseeing the coming prosperity, subsequently acquired great domains by purchase, either from the railways which had received land grants, or directly from the Government. Some of these speculators, by holding their lands for a rise, made it difficult for immigrants to acquire small freeholds, and in some cases checked the growth of farms. Others let their land on short leases to farmers, who thus came into a comparatively precarious and often necessitous condition; others established enormous farms, in which the soil is cultivated by hired labourers, many of whom are discharged after the harvest—a phenomenon rare in the United States, which, as everybody knows, is a country of moderately-sized farms, owned by persons who do most of their labour by their own and their children's hands.[1] Thus the land system of California presents features both peculiar and dangerous, a contrast between great properties, often appearing to conflict with the general weal, and the sometimes hard-pressed small farmer, together with a mass of unsettled labour thrown without work into the towns at certain times of the year.

Everywhere in the West the power of the railways has excited the jealousy of the people. In California, however, it has roused most hostility, because no State has been so much at the mercy of one powerful corporation. The Central Pacific Railway, whose main line extends from San Francisco to Ogden in Utah, where it meets the Union Pacific and touches the Denver and Rio Grande system, had been up till 1877, when my narrative begins—indeed it is practically still—the only route to the Mississippi valley and Atlantic,[1] and therefore possessed immense influence over the trade of the whole State. It was controlled by a small knot of men who had risen from insignificance to affluence, held nearly all the other railway lines in California, employed an enormous number of clerks and workmen, and made the weight of their hand felt wherever their interest was involved. Alike as capitalists, as potentates, and as men whose rise to gigantic wealth seemed due as much to the growth of the State as to their own abilities, and therefore to come under the principle which is called in England that of the "unearned increment," they excited irritation among the farming and trading class, as well as among the labourers. As great fortunes have in America been usually won by unusual gifts, any envy they can excite is tempered by admiration for the ability shown in acquiring them. The common people felt a kind of pride in the late Mr. A. T. Stewart, and feel it now even in that flagrant "monopolist," Mr. Jay Gould. But while these particular railway magnates were men of talent, there were also in California millionaires who had grown rich merely by lucky speculation. They displayed their wealth with a vulgar and unbecoming ostentation. They did not, as rich men nearly always do in the Atlantic States, bestow a large part of it on useful public objects. There was therefore nothing to break the wave of suspicious dislike.

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[1] "Latifundia perdunt Californiam," some one said to me in San Francisco.

Most of the Western States have been peopled by a steady influx of settlers from two or three older States. Minnesota, for instance, and Iowa have grown by the overflow of Illinois and Ohio, as well as by immigration direct from Europe. But California was filled by a sudden rush of adventurers from all parts of the world. They came mostly *via* Panama, for there was no transcontinental railway till 1869, and a great many came from the Southern States. This mixed multitude, bringing with it a variety of manners, customs, and ideas, formed a society more mobile and unstable, less governed by fixed beliefs and principles, than one finds in such North-western communities as I have just mentioned. Living far away from the steadying influences of the Eastern States, the Californians have developed, and are proud of having done so, a sort of Pacific type, which, though differing but slightly from the usual Western type, has less of the English element than one discovers in the American who lives on the Atlantic side of the Rocky Mountains. Add to this that California is the last place to the west before you come to Japan. That scum which the westward moving wave of emigration carries on its crest is here stopped, because it can go no farther. It accumulates in San Francisco, and forms a dangerous constituent in the population of that great and growing city—a population perhaps more mixed than one finds anywhere else in America, for Frenchmen, Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, and the children of Australian convicts abound there, side by side with negroes, Germans, and Irish. Of the Chinese one need not speak; for, though they number some twelve thousand, have a large quarter to themselves, and have given rise to the dominant question in Pacific coast politics, they do not themselves join in any political movement, but mingle as little with the whites as oil with water.

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[1] There are now two other transcontinental lines, but one of them lies far to the north, and the other belongs to the same group of men as have controlled the Central Pacific.

California, more than any other part of the Union, is a country by itself, and San Francisco a capital. Cut off from the more populous parts of the Mississippi valley by an almost continuous desert of twelve hundred miles, across which the two daily trains move like ships across the ocean, separated from Oregon on the north by a wilderness of sparsely settled mountain and forest, it has grown up in its own way and acquired a sort of consciousness of separate existence. San Francisco dwarfs the other cities, and is a commercial and intellectual centre, and source of influence for the surrounding regions, more powerful over them than is any Eastern city over its neighbourhood. It is a New York which has got no Boston on one side of it, and no shrewd and orderly rural population on the other, to keep it in order. Hence both State and city are less steadied by national opinion than any other State or city within the wide compass of the Union.[1]

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[1] I am sensible of the incompleteness of the narrative which follows, and can excuse it only by the extreme difficulty of procuring adequate data. When I

These facts in Californian history must be borne in mind in order to understand the events I am about to sketch. They show how suited is her soil to revolutionary movements. They suggest that movements natural here are much less likely to arise in other parts of the Union.

II. THE SAND LOT PARTY

In 1877 California was suffering from "hard times." The severe commercial depression which began in the Eastern States in 1873, and touched the lowest point about 1876, had reached the Pacific coast, and was aggravated there by a heavy fall in mining stocks. The great Bonanza finds some years before had ushered in a period of wild speculation. Everybody gambled in stocks from railroad kings down to maidservants. Stocks had now fallen, and everybody was hard hit. The railroad kings could stand their losses, but the clerks and shop assistants and workmen suffered, for their savings were gone and many were left heavily in debt, with their houses mortgaged and no hope of redemption. Trade was bad, work was scarce, and for what there was of it the Chinese, willing to take only half the ordinary wages, competed with the white labourer. The mob of San Francisco, swelled by disappointed miners from the camps and labourers out of work, men lured from distant homes by the hope of wealth and ease in the land of gold, saw itself on the verge of starvation, while the splendid mansions of speculators, who fifteen years before had kept little shops, rose along the heights of the city, and the newspapers reported their luxurious banquets. In the country the farmers were scarcely less discontented. They too had "gone into stocks," their farms were

visited San Francisco in 1881, and again in 1883, people were unwilling to talk about the Kearney agitation, feeling, it seemed to me, rather ashamed of it, and annoyed that so much should have been made of it (more they declared than it deserved) in the Eastern States. When I asked how I could learn the facts in detail, they answered, "Only by reading through the files of the newspapers for the years 1877-80 inclusive," a piece of work which would have taken six months. Some added that there were so many lies in the newspapers that I would not have got at the facts even then. Failing this method, I was obliged to rely on what I could pick up in conversation. I have, however, derived some assistance from a brilliant article by Mr. Henry George, who was then a resident of San Francisco, published in the New York *Popular Science Monthly* for August 1880. Although I do not adopt the conclusions to which many of his reflections seem intended to point, some of those reflections are true and forcible, deserving to be well weighed by Californian statesmen.

mortgaged, and many of them were bankrupt. They complained that the railroads crushed them by heavy freight rates, and asked why they, the bone and sinew of the country, should toil without profit, while local millionaires and wealthy Eastern bondholders drew large incomes from the traffic which the plough of the agriculturist and the pick-axe of the miner had created.

Both in the country and in the city there was disgust with politics and the politicians. The legislature was composed almost wholly either of office-seekers from the city or of petty country lawyers, needy and narrow-minded men. Those who had virtue enough not to be "got at" by the great corporations had not intelligence enough to know how to resist their devices. It was a common saying in the State that each successive legislature was worse than its predecessor. The meeting of the representatives of the people was seen with anxiety: their departure with relief. Some opprobrious epithet was bestowed upon each. One was "the legislature of a thousand drinks"; another "the legislature of a thousand steals." County government was little better; city government was even worse. The judges were not corrupt, but most of them, as was natural considering the scanty salaries assigned to them, were inferior men, not fit to cope with the counsel who practised before them. Partly owing to the weakness of juries, partly to the intricacies of the law and the defects of the recently adopted code, criminal justice was halting and uncertain, and malefactors often went unpunished. It became a proverb that you might safely commit a murder if you took the advice of the best lawyers.

Neither Democrats nor Republicans had done, or seemed likely to do, anything to remove these evils or to improve the lot of the people. They were only seeking (so men thought) places or the chance of jobs for themselves, and could always be bought by a powerful corporation. Working men must help themselves; there must be new methods and a new departure. Everything, in short, was ripe for a demagogue. Fate was kind to the Californians in sending them a demagogue of a common type, noisy and confident, but with neither political foresight nor constructive talent.

Late in 1877 a meeting was called in San Francisco to express sympathy with the men then on strike at Pittsburg in Pennsylvania. Their riotous violence, which had alarmed the respectable classes all over America, had gratified the discontented railroad operatives of California, then meditating a strike of their own against a threatened reduction of wages. Some strong language used at this meeting, and exaggerated by the newspapers, frightened the business men into forming a sort of committee of public safety, with the president of the famous Vigilance Committee of 1856, a resolute and capable man, at its head. Persons enrolled by it paraded the streets with sticks for some days to prevent any attack on the Chinese, but it was soon perceived that there was no real danger, and the chief result of the incident was further irritation of the poorer classes, who perceived that the rich were afraid of them, and therefore disposed to deal harshly with them. Shortly after came an election of municipal officers and members of the State legislature. The contest, as is the custom in America, brought into life a number of clubs and other organizations, purporting to represent various parties or sections of a party, and among others a body calling itself the "Working men's Trade and Labour Union," the secretary of which was a certain Denis Kearney.[1] When the election was over, Kearney declared that he would keep his union going, and form a working man's party. He was Irish by birth, and though in business as a drayman, had some experience as a sailor, and held a master's certificate. He had borne a good character for industry and steadiness till some friend "put him into stocks," and the loss of what he hoped to gain is said to have first turned him to agitation. He had gained some faculty in speaking by practice at a Sunday debating club called the Lyceum of Self Culture. A self-culti-ing Lyceum sounds as harmless as a Social Science congress, but there are times when even mutual improvement societies may be dangerous. Kearney's tongue, loud and abusive, soon gathered an audience. On the west side of San Francisco, as you cross the peninsula from the harbour towards the ocean, there is (or then was) a large open space, laid out for building, but not yet built on, covered with sand, and hence called the Sand Lot. Here the mob had been wont to gather for meetings; here Kearney formed his party. At first he had mostly vagabonds to listen, but one of the two great newspapers took him up. These two, the *Chronicle* and the *Morning Call*, were in keen rivalry, and the former, seeing in this new movement a chance of going ahead, filling its columns with sensational matter, and increasing its sale among working men, went in hot and strong for the Sand Lot party. One of its reporters has been credited with dressing up Kearney's speeches into something approaching literary form, for the orator was a half educated man, with ideas chiefly gathered from the daily press. The advertisement which the *Chronicle* gave him by its reports and articles, and which he repaid by advising working men to take it, soon made him a personage; and his position was finally assured by his being, along with several other speakers, arrested and prosecuted on a charge of riot, in respect of inflammatory speeches delivered at a meeting on the top of Nob Hill, one of the steep heights which make San Francisco the most picturesque of American cities. The prosecution failed, and Kearney was a popular hero. Clerks and the better class of citizens now began to attend his meetings, though many went from mere curiosity, as they would have gone to a circus: the W.P.C. (Working man's Party of California) was organized as a regular party, embracing the whole State of California, with Kearney for its president. The gathering on the Sand Lot to which all those "eager for new things," as the discontented class were of old time called, flocked every Sunday afternoon to cheer denunciations of corporations and monopolists, and to "resolute" against the rich generally, became a centre of San Francisco politics, and through the reports of some newspapers and the attacks of others, roused the people of the entire State. The *Morning Call* had now followed the lead of the *Chronicle*, trying to outbid it for the support of the working men. There was nothing positive, nothing constructive or practical, either in these tirades or in the programme of the party, but an open-air crowd is not critical, and gives the loudest cheers to the strongest language. Kearney had no plans beyond keeping his party going, but he was self-confident, domineering, and not without practical shrewdness. At any rate, he knew how to push himself to the front, and win the reputation of rugged honesty—he always dressed as a workman and ran for no office:—and while denouncing politicians as thieves and capitalists as bloodsuckers, while threatening fire and the halter if the demands of the people were not granted, he tried to avoid direct breaches of the law. On one occasion he held a gathering beside the mansions of the Central Pacific magnates on Nob Hill, pointed to them and to the bonfire which marked the place of meeting, and while telling the people that these men deserved to have their houses burned, abstained (as I was informed) from suggesting that the torch should be applied then and there. Another time he bade the people wait a little till his party had carried their candidate for the governorship of the State: "Then we shall have the control of the militia and the armouries; then we can go down to the Pacific Mail Company's dock and turn back the steamers that come in bringing the Chinese."[1] Immense enthusiasm was evoked by these harangues. He was crowned with flowers; he was, when released from prison on one occasion, drawn in triumph by his followers in his own dray; newspaper reporters thronged around to interview him; prominent politicians came to seek favours from him on the sly. Discontent among the working class was the chief cause that made the new party grow, for grow it did: and though San Francisco was the centre of its strength, it had clubs in Sacramento and the other cities, all led by the San Francisco convention which Kearney swayed. But there were further causes not to be passed over. One was the distrust of the officials of the State and the city. The municipal government of San Francisco was far from pure. The officials enriched themselves, while the paving, the draining, the lighting were scandalously neglected; corruption and political jobbery had found their way even into school management, and liquor was sold everywhere, the publicans being leagued with the heads of the police to prevent the enforcement of the laws. Another was the support given to their countryman by the Irish, here a discontented and turbulent part of the population, by the lower class of German immigrants, and by the longshore men, also an important element in this great port, and a dangerous element wherever one finds them. The activity of the *Chronicle* counted for much, for it was ably written, went everywhere, and continued to give a point and force to Kearney's harangues, which made them more effective in print than even his voice had made them to the listening crowds. Some think that the monied classes at this juncture ought to have bought up the *Chronicle* (supposing they could have done so secretly), and its then editor and proprietor has been much maligned if he would have refused to be bought up.[1] The newspapers certainly played a great part in the movement; they turned the Working man's Party into a force by representing it to have already become one. Most important of all, however, was the popular hatred of the Chinese. This is so strong in California that any party which can become its exponent rides on the crest of the wave. The old parties, though both denouncing Chinese immigration in every convention they held, and professing to legislate against it, had failed to check it by State laws, and had not yet obtained Federal laws prohibiting it. They had therefore lost the confidence of the masses on this point, while the Sand Lot party, whose leaders had got into trouble for the ferocity of their attacks on the Chinese, gained that confidence, and became the "anti-Mongolian" party *par excellence.* Kearney ended every speech with the words, "And whatever happens, the Chinese must go."

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[1] See note at the end of this volume.

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[1] In an earlier agitation this company's yard was attacked, but the only person killed was a lad (one of the special constables defending it) whose gun burst

Meanwhile, where were the old parties, and what was their attitude to this new one? It is so hard in America to establish a new movement outside the regular party lines, that when such a movement is found powerful we may expect to find that there exist special causes weakening these lines. Such forces existed in California. She lies so far from the Atlantic and Mississippi States, and has been so much occupied with her own concerns—even the War of Secession did not interest her as it did the country east of the Rocky Mountains—that the two great national parties have had a comparatively weak hold on the people. The Chinese question and the railroad question dwarfed the regular party issues. Neither party had shown itself able to deal with the former—both parties were suspected of having been tampered with on the latter. Both had incurred the discredit which follows every party in hard times, when the public are poor, and see that their taxes have been ill-spent. The Sand Lot party drew its support chiefly from the Democrats, who here, as in the East, have the larger share of the rabble: hence its rise was not unwelcome to the Republicans, because it promised to divide and weaken their old opponents; while the Democrats, hoping ultimately to capture it, gave a feeble resistance. Thus it grew the faster, and soon began to run a ticket of its own at city and State elections. It carried most of the city offices, and when the question was submitted to the people whether a new Constitution should be framed for California, it threw its vote in favour of having one and prevailed.

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[1] This editor became subsequently famous over America by his "difficulties" with a leading Baptist minister of San Francisco. He had shot this minister in the street from behind the blind of a carriage, and thereby made him so popular that the W.P.C. carried him for their candidate for the mayoralty. The blood feud, however, was not settled by this unintended service, for the clergyman's son went soon after to the *Chronicle* office and slew the editor. The young man was tried, and, of course, acquitted. He had only done what the customary law of primitive peoples requires. It survives in Albania, and is scarcely extinct in Corsica.

"The hoodlums"[1] and other ragamuffins who had formed the audience at the first Sand Lot meetings could not have effected this. But the W.P.C. now got a heavy vote in San Francisco from the better sort of working-men, clerks, and small shopkeepers. In the rural districts they had still more powerful allies. The so-called Granger movement had spread from the upper Mississippi States into California, and enlisted the farmers in a campaign against the railroads and other "monopolists" and corporations. To compel a reduction of charges for goods and passengers, to prevent the railroad from combining with the Panama Steamship Company, to reduce public expenditure, to shift more taxation on to the shoulders of the rich, and generally to "cinch" capital—these were the aims of the Granger party; nor will any one who knows California think them wholly unreasonable. The only way to effect them was by a new Constitution, not only because some could not have been attained under the then existing Constitution (passed in 1849 and amended in several points subsequently), but also because the people have more direct control over legislation through a convention making a Constitution than they have over the action of a legislature. The delegates to a convention go straight from the election to their work, have not time to forget, or to devise means of evading, their pledges, are less liable to be "got at" by capitalists. They constitute only one house, whereas the legislature has two. There is no governor to stand in the way with his veto. The rarity and importance of the occasion fixes public attention. Thus a new Constitution became the object of the popular cry, and a heavy vote in favour of having it was cast by the country farmers as well as by decent working people in the towns, just because it promised a new departure and seemed to get behind the old parties. As often happens, the "good citizens," who ought to have seen the danger of framing a new Constitution at a time of such excitement, were apathetic and unorganized.

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[1] The term "hoodlums" denotes those who are called in Australia "larrikins," loafing youths of mischievous proclivities.

Next came, in the summer of 1878, the choice of delegates to the convention which was to frame the new Constitution. The Working man's Party carried many seats in the convention, but its nominees were mostly ignorant men, without experience or constructive ideas.[1] Among the lawyers, who secured a large representation, there were some so closely bound by business ties to the great corporations as to be disposed to protect the interests of these corporations, as well as those of the legal profession. In justice to many of them it must be added that their respect for the principles of the common law and for sound constitutional doctrine led them to do their best to restrain the wild folly of their colleagues. However, the working men's delegates, together with the more numerous and less corruptible delegates of the farmers, got their way in many things and produced that surprising instrument by which California is now governed.

III. THE NEW CONSTITUTION

AN able Californian writer gives the following account of the Constitution of 1879:—

"The new Constitution adopted in May 1879 made radical changes in almost every department of the Government. It completely changed the judicial system, and thereby rendered necessary an alteration of almost all the laws relating to civil and criminal procedure. It revolutionized the working, and to a great extent the scope of the legislative department, lopping off special and local legislation, and obliging the objects heretofore obtained by such legislation to be covered by general law. As a part of this revolution, it required a new plan of county, township, and city organization, with the idea partly of forcing the same general laws upon all local governments, and partly of investing such local governments with power to legislate for themselves. But the main underlying spirit of the new instrument was an attack upon capital under the specious name of opposition to monopolies. To use an expressive Californian phrase, capital, and especially accumulated capital, wherever it was found, was to be 'cinched.'[1] With this object in view, cheap labour was to be driven out of the country, and corporations so restricted and hampered in their operations as to be unable to make large profits. The cry was that there were unjust discriminations on the part of railroads, and extortionate rates on the part of water and gas companies; that vicious practices were indulged in by mining corporations; that fair day's wages for fair day's labour could not be obtained; that rich men rolled in luxury, and that poor men were cramped with want. It may be admitted that there were some grounds for these complaints. But it does not follow that capital was any more tyrannical or corporations are more unconscionable than by their very nature they are compelled to be. The circling course of events had brought around a period of hard times. The result was the new order of things, an attempt to remedy the evils of the times by an attack in the shape of constitutional legislation upon wealth, and the various laws and systems by which wealth is accumulated and kept together It cannot be said to have been a malicious attack: it was not intended on the part of the majority who advocated it as communism; but it was, to say the least, the application of violent and dangerous remedies for a disease which ought to have been treated by a gentler method."[2]

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[1] Anecdotes were still current three years afterwards of the ignorance of some of the delegates. When the clause prohibiting any "law impairing the obligation of contracts" (taken from the Federal Constitution) was under discussion, a San Francisco delegate objected to it. An eminent lawyer, leader of the Californian bar, who recognized in the objector a little upholsterer who used to do jobs about his house, asked why. The upholsterer replied, that he disapproved altogether of contracts, because he thought work should be done by hiring workmen for the day.

Some of the above points, and particularly the changes in local government and in the judicial system, lie outside the scope of the present narrative, which is intended to illustrate how democracy may work in a State government. We may therefore confine ourselves to inquiring how far the objects aimed at by the Sand Lot party were attained through the Constitution whose enactment it had secured. They and the Grangers, or farmer's party, which made common cause with them, sought to deal with four questions in which lay the grievances chiefly complained of by discontented Californians.

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[1] "Cinching" is drawing tight the girths of a horse.

[2] Mr. Theodore H. Hittell in the *Berkeley Quarterly* for July 1880, p. 234.

These were—

The general corruption of politicians, and bad conduct of State, county, and city government.

Taxation, alleged to press too heavily on the poorer classes.

The tyranny of corporations, especially railroads.

The Chinese.

Let us see what remedies the Constitution applied to each of these. The cry of the Sand Lot party had been: "None but honest men for the offices." To find the honest men, and, having found them, to put them in office and keep them there, is the great problem of American politics. The contributions made to its solution by the Convention of 1879 were neither novel nor promising. I have noted at the end of this chapter a few of some of its more important provisions, and the Constitution itself will be found printed in full at the end of the preceding volume. Here I will merely sum up its main results under the four heads above-mentioned.[1]

1. It restricts and limits in every possible way the powers of the State legislature, leaving it little authority except to carry out by statutes the provisions of the Constitution. It makes "lobbying," *i.e.* the attempt to corrupt a legislator, and the corrupt action of a legislator, felony.
2. It forbids the State legislature or local authorities to incur debts beyond a certain limit, taxes uncultivated land equally with cultivated, makes sums due on mortgage taxable in the district where the mortgaged property lies, authorizes an income tax, and directs a highly inquisitorial scrutiny of everybody's property for the purposes of taxation.
3. It forbids the "watering of stock," declares that the State has power to prevent corporations from conducting their business so as to "infringe the general well-being of the State"; directs the charges of telegraph and gas companies, and of water-supplying bodies, to be regulated and limited by law; institutes a railroad commission with power to fix the transportation rates on all railroads and examine the books and accounts of all transportation companies.

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[1] As to the nature of State constitutions in general, and the restrictions they now impose on legislatures, see Chapters XXXVII. *sqq.* in Vol. I.

4. It forbids all corporations to employ any Chinese, debars them from the suffrage, forbids their employment on any public works, annuls all contracts for "coolie labour," directs the legislature to provide for the punishment of any company which shall import Chinese, to impose conditions on the residence of Chinese, and to cause their removal if they fail to observe these conditions.

It also declares that eight hours shall constitute a legal day's work on all public works.

When the Constitution came to be submitted to the vote of the people, in May 1877, it was vehemently opposed by the monied men, who of course influence, in respect of their wealth, a far larger number of votes than they themselves cast. Several of the conservative delegates had, I was told, abstained from putting forth their full efforts to have the worst proposals rejected by the Convention in the belief that when the people came to consider them, they would ensure the rejection of the whole instrument. Some of its provisions were alleged to be opposed to the Constitution of the United States, and therefore null. Others were denounced as ruinous to commerce and industry, calculated to drive capital out of the country The struggle was severe, but the Granger party commanded so many rural votes, and the Sand Lot party so many in San Francisco (whose population is nearly a third of that of the entire State), that the Constitution was carried, though by a small majority, only 11,000 out of a total of 145,000 citizens voting. Of course it had to be enacted as a whole, amendment being impossible where a vote of the people is taken.

The next thing was to choose a legislature to carry out the Constitution. Had the same influences prevailed in this election as prevailed in that of the Constitutional Convention, the results might have been serious. But fortunately there was a slight reaction, now that the first and main step seemed to have been taken. The Republicans, Democrats, and Sand Lot party all ran "tickets," and owing to this division of the working men's and the Granger vote between Kearneyite candidates and the Democrats, the Republicans secured a majority, though a small one. Now the Republicans are in California, as they would themselves say, the moderate or conservative party, or as their opponents said, the party of the rich and the monopolists.

Their predominance made the legislature of 1880 a body more cautious than might have been expected. Professing hearty loyalty to the new Constitution, the majority showed this loyalty by keeping well within the letter of that instrument, while the working men and farmer members were disposed to follow out by bold legislation what they called its spirit. Thus the friends and the enemies of the Constitution changed places. Those who had opposed it in the Convention posed as its admirers and defenders; while those who had clamoured for and carried it now began to wish that they had made its directions more imperative. The influence and the money of the railroad and the other great corporations were of course brought into play, despite the terrors of a prosecution for felony, and became an additional "conservative force" of great moment.

Thus a series of statutes was passed which gave effect to the provisions of the Constitution in a form perhaps as little harmful as could be contrived, and certainly less harmful than had been feared when the Constitution was put to the vote. Many bad bills, particularly those aimed at the Chinese, were defeated, and one may say generally that the expectations of the Sand Lot men were grievously disappointed.

While all this was passing, Kearney had more and more declined in fame and power. He did not sit either in the Constitutional Convention or in the legislature of 1880. The mob had tired of his harangues, especially as little seemed to come of them, and as the candidates of the W.P.C. had behaved no better in office than those of the old parties. He had quarrelled with the *Chronicle.* He was, moreover, quite unfitted by knowledge or training to argue the legal, economical, and political questions involved in the new constitution, so that the prominence of these questions threw him into the background. An anti-Chinese agitation, in which the unemployed marched about San Francisco, calling on employers to discharge all Chinese workmen, caused some alarm in the winter of 1879-80, but Kearney was absent at the time, and when he returned his party was wavering. Even his prosecution and imprisonment on what seems to have been a somewhat trivial charge gave only a brief revival to his popularity. The W.P.C. was defeated in a city election in March 1880 by a combination of the better class of Democrats with the Republicans, and soon after expired.

When I was in San Francisco in the fall of 1881, people talked of Kearney as a spent rocket. Some did not know whether he was in the city. Others said that the capitalists had rendered him harmless by the gift of a new dray and team. Not long afterwards he went East, and mounted the stump on behalf of the Labour party in New York. He proved, however, unequal to his reputation, for mob oratory is a flower which does not always bear transplantation to a new soil. Since 1880 he has played no part in Californian politics, and was indeed, in 1883, so insignificant that no one then seemed to care to know where he went or what he was doing. And now, as the Icelandic sagas say, he is out of the story.

After the session of 1880, Californian politics resumed their old features. Election frauds are said to have become less frequent since glass ballot boxes were adopted, whereby the practice of stuffing of a box with papers before the voters arrive in the morning has been checked. But the game between the two old parties goes on as before. What remained of the Sand Lot group was reabsorbed into the Democratic party, out of which it had mainly come, and to which it had strong affinities. The city government of San Francisco is much what it was before the agitation, nor does the legislature seem to be any purer or wiser. When the railroad commission had to be elected, the railroad magnates managed so to influence the election, although it was made directly by the people, that two of the three commissioners chosen were, or soon afterwards came, under their influence, while the third was a mere declaimer. None of them (as I was told in 1883) possessed the practical knowledge of railway business needed to enable them to deal, in the manner contemplated by the Constitution, with the oppressions alleged to be practised by the railroads ; and the complaints of those oppressions seemed to be as common as formerly. I asked why the railroad magnates had not been content to rely on certain provisions of the Federal Constitution against the control sought to be exerted over their undertaking. The answer was that they had considered this course, but had concluded that it was cheaper to capture a majority of the Commission.[1] (The passing of the Inter-State Commerce Act by Congress has now somewhat changed the situation.) Some of the legislation framed under the Constitution of 1879 has already been pronounced by the Supreme Court of the State invalid, as opposed to that instrument itself or to the Federal Constitution, and more of it may share the same fate. The condition of the people at large does not seem to have substantially changed, though the restrictions imposed on the legislature (as regards special legislation) and on local authorities (as regards borrowing and the undertaking of costly public works) have proved beneficial. The net result of the whole agitation was to give the monied classes in California a fright; to win for the State a bad name throughout America, and, by checking for a time the influx of capital, to retard her growth just when prosperity was reviving over the rest of the country; to worry, without seriously crippling, the great corporations, and to leave the working classes and farmers where they were. No great harm has been done, but a mischievous example has been set, and an instrument remains in force which may some day, should popular clamour insist on the execution of some of its clauses, and the passing of further legislation in the sense they contemplate, be made the means of inflicting injury on the capitalist class.

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[1] Of course I do not vouch for the accuracy of the account which my Californian informants gave me, but merely repeat what seemed the prevailing opinion.

IV. Observations on the Movement

I would leave the reader to draw a moral for himself, were he not likely to err, as I did myself, till corrected by my Californian friends, by thinking the whole movement more serious than it really was.

It rose with surprising ease and swiftness. The conditions were no doubt exceptionally favourable. No other population in America furnished so good a field for demagogy. But the demagogue himself was not formidable. He did not make the movement, but merely rode for a moment on the crest of the wave. A European may say that a stronger man, a man with knowledge, education, and a fierce tenacity of fibre, might have built up a more permanent power, and used it with more destructive effect. But the Californians say that a strong man would not have been suffered to do what Kearney did with impunity. Kearney throve because the solid classes despised him, and felt that the best thing was to let him talk himself out and reveal his own hollowness.

The movement fell as quickly as it rose. This was partly due, as has just been said, to the incompetence of the leader, who had really nothing to propose and did not know how to use the force that seemed to have come to his hands. Something, however, must be set down to the credit of the American party system. The existing parties are so strong, and are spread over so wide an area, that it is very difficult to create a new party. Resting on a complex local organization, and supported by the central organization for the purposes of Federal politics, they can survive a temporary eclipse in a particular State, while a new party cannot count itself permanent till it has established some such organization, central as well as local. This may operate badly in keeping old parties alive, when they deserve to die. But it operates well in checking the growth or abridging the life of mischievous local factions. That fund of good sense, moreover, which lies at the bottom of nearly every native American mind, soon produces a reaction against extreme measures. When the native voters, especially those who owned even a little property, had relieved their minds by voting for the new Constitution, they felt they had gone far enough in the direction of change, and at the election of a legislature voted for moderate men. Support from this class having been withdrawn, the rabble of the Sand Lot ceased to be dangerous; and although threats of violence were abundant, and sometimes bloodthirsty, there was very little sedition or disorder.

Every stump orator in the West says a great deal more than he means, and is promptly discounted by his hearers. The populace of San Francisco has now and again menaced the Chinese quarter and the docks of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which brings, or till recent legislation brought, the Chinese over. Once the Chinese armed in defence of China town, and twice during these agitations a committee of public safety was formed to protect the banks and keep order in the streets. But many people doubt whether order was really endangered. The few attacks made on Chinese stores were done by small bands of hoodlums, who disappeared at the sight of the police. The police and militia seem to have behaved well all through. Moreover, any serious riot would in San Francisco be quelled speedily and severely by the respectable classes, who would supersede the municipal authority if it seemed to fear, or to be secretly leagued with, the authors of sedition. Even the meetings of the various political parties were scarcely ever disturbed or "bull-dozed" by their opponents. When the Kearneyites once or twice molested Democratic meetings, they were so promptly repelled, that they desisted for the future.

There was very little of conscious or constructive communism or socialism in the movement. Kearney told the working men that the rich had thriven at their expense, and talked of hanging thieves in office, and burning the houses of capitalists. But neither he nor any other demagogue assailed the institution of property. The farmers, whose vote carried the new Constitution, owned their farms, and would have recoiled from suggestions of agrarian socialism. And in fact the new Constitution, although it contains provisions hostile to capital, "is anything but agrarian or communistic, for it entrenches vested rights, especially in land, more thoroughly than before. . . . It is anything but a working man's Constitution; it levies a poll tax without exemption; disfranchises a considerable portion of the floating labour vote; prevents the opening of public works in emergencies, and in various ways which working men, even in their present stage of enlightenment, may easily see, sacrifices the interests of the labouring classes, as well as the capitalists, to what the landowners regard as their interests."[1] A solitary Parisian communist who was elected to the convention "exercised no influence, and was expelled from the party for refusing to support the new Constitution." There were some rich men, and lawyers connected with the great corporations, among the candidates and supporters of the Sand Lot party. Others of the same class who tried secretly to use it had probably their selfish ends to serve, but would have been less willing to increase its strength had they regarded it as an attack on property in general. The fact is that theoretical communism has no hold upon native Americans, while its practical application does not commend itself to farmers who own their land and workmen who own their houses. The belief which prevailed in the eastern States that the movement had a communistic character was therefore a mistaken one.

More mischief would have been done but for the existence of the Federal Constitution. It imposed a certain check on the Convention, who felt the absurdity of trying to legislate right in the teeth of an overruling instrument. It has been the means of upsetting some of the clauses of the Constitution of 1879, and some of the statutes passed by the legislature under them, and has discouraged attempts to pass others.

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[1] Mr. H. George, in *Popular Science Monthly* for August 1880.

On the whole, not much evil has been wrought, at least not much compared with what was feared in the State itself, and believed in the East to have resulted. The better sort of Californians two years after were no longer alarmed, but seemed half ashamed and half amused when they recollected the scenes I have described. They felt somewhat as a man feels when he awakes unrefreshed after a night of bad dreams. He fears at first that his parched tongue and throbbing head may mean that he is in for an illness. But when he has breakfasted and is again immersed in work, these sensations and apprehensions disappear together. After all, say the lawyers and bankers of San Francisco, we are going on as before, property will take care of itself in this country, things are not really worse so far as our business is concerned.

Neither are things better. It is natural to suppose that a shock, however short, must make a difference to a community, and affect its future fortunes. If this shock has so affected California, the results are not yet apparent. Though the new Constitution has not altered the economic condition of the workmen and farmers, it might have been thought that the crisis, which suddenly startled this busy and luxurious society, would rouse good citizens to a more active interest in politics, make them see the necessity of getting better men into the offices and the legislature, and indeed of purifying public life altogether. But I could not discover that these consequences have followed. In the stress and hurry of Californian life, impressions pass swiftly away. Good citizens are disposed to stand aside; and among the richer there are those who look forward to a time when, having made their fortunes, they will go East to spend them. It may be that another shock is in store for the Golden State, more violent than the last, although equally within legal limits, for of mere mob law and anarchy there seems no danger. The forces at the disposal of order are always the stronger. It may on the other hand be that as society settles down from the feverish instability of these early days, as the mass of the people acquire a more enlightened view of their true interests, as those moral influences which count for so much in America assert their dominion more widely, the present evils will slowly pass away.

The president of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 told me that all he had seen happen in San Francisco, since the days when it was a tiny Spanish mission station, made him confident that everything would come out straight. Probably he is right. American experience shows that the optimists generally are.

NOTE

I give here a few of the more novel or curious provisions of the Constitution of California of 1879. The whole instrument will be found printed at the end of Volume I.

I. A main object was to prevent the corruption of the legislature and of office-holders. Art. iv. § 35 provides that a legislator influenced in his vote by reward or promise of reward is to be deemed guilty of felony, and punished accordingly, as well as disfranchised and disqualified from ever holding any office. The making of profit out of any public (city, town, or county) moneys, or using them otherwise than as authorized by law, is declared to be a felony. Official salaries are limited. The higher judges are required to give their decisions in writing, stating the grounds (vi. § 3). The powers of the legislature are restricted in a hundred ways, till the reader asks what can be left to it (iv. § 25, xi. §§ 2, 3, 6, 9-14). Whenever the legislature has to elect to any office, members must vote *viva voce* and have their votes recorded (iv. § 28). These restrictions on the legislature were probably necessary. Similar ones are to be found in nearly all the newer State Constitutions. But the air of suspicion that runs through them, and the penalties threatened against corruption, show how little hope was entertained of securing the election of honest men.

II. The attempt to diminish the burden of taxation is made in two ways. One is by limiting the power of the legislature and of local authorities to incur debts and to undertake public works, as well as by fencing round State appropriations with safeguards designed to protect the treasury (see Arts. xvi. § 1, xi. §§ 18, 19, iv. § 34). Another is by imposing taxes on property which had previously escaped it, or borne it at a comparatively low valuation. "Cultivated and uncultivated land of the same quality and similarly situated shall be assessed at the same value." This strikes also at the practice of holding land for a rise (Art. xiii. § 2). A mortgage contract or other obligation securing a debt is for the purposes of taxation to be deemed an interest in the property it affects; the owner of the property is (except as to railroads, and other quasi-public corporations) to be taxed on its value minus the amount of the security, and the owner of the security taxed on its value in the district where the property is situate. All future contracts for the payment of taxes by a debtor on money loaned, or on a mortgage, are to be void as to any interest specified therein, and as to any tax.

III. Several attacks are levelled at corporations. Every stockholder is to be personally liable for all liabilities incurred while he was a stockholder in proportion to his holding. No corporation shall hold for more than five years any real estate except such as is necessary for carrying on its business (xii. § 9). There are provisions against the issue of stock or bonds, except for money actually paid or property received. Railroad companies are forbidden to combine with shipowners for a sharing of earnings. Discrimination in charges by railroads, or the charging less for transportation over a longer distance than is charged for a shorter distance, are strictly prohibited. A board of railroad commissioners is created, one to be elected in each of three State districts, with the power and the duty to establish rates of charges for the transportation of passengers and freight, to examine the books and papers of all railroad and other transportation companies, prescribe a uniform system of accounts for, and determine complaints against, such companies. A company may be heavily fined for non-compliance, and exemplary damages given against it by a jury in any action for charging excessive rates. "All contracts for the sale of shares of the capital stock of any corporation, on margin or to be delivered on a future day, shall be void, and any money paid on such contracts may be recovered by the party paying it by suit in any court of competent jurisdiction" (iv. § 26).

IV. A whole article is dedicated to the Chinese (Art. xix.) Among other things it contains the following: "The presence of foreigners ineligible to become citizens of the United States is declared to be dangerous to the well-being of the State, and the legislature shall discourage their immigration by all the means within its power. Asiatic coolieism is a form of human slavery, and is for ever prohibited in this State, and all contracts for coolie labour shall be void. All companies or corporations, whether formed in this country or in any foreign country, for the importation of such labour, shall be subject to such penalties as the legislature may prescribe." This solicitude to prevent a "form of human slavery" without any reference to the main ground of hostility to the Chinese, recalls Bill Nye's reflections on "Cheap Chinee labour," after he had been cheated by Ah Sin. There are, of course, better reasons than either the Convention's or Bill Nye's for disliking Chinese immigration. Art. ii. § 1 attempts to exclude any "native of China" from ever exercising the privileges of an elector in California. But see the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The Chinese have not hitherto sought naturalization, and seldom remain more than a few years.

V. A provision that "The public school system shall include primary and grammar schools, and such high schools and evening schools, normal schools and technical schools, as may be established by the State or a local authority, but the entire revenue derived from the State school fund and the State school tax shall be applied exclusively to the support of primary and grammar schools" (ix. § 6) was at first regretted by the wiser sort as indicating an indifference to secondary education; but has been found to work for good in inducing the cities, when they could not draw upon the State school fund for the support of their high schools, to make a more liberal provision than formerly for these schools out of local taxation.

VI. Among improvements introduced by the new Constitution may be noted the lengthening of the term of judges of the supreme court from ten to twelve years, the prohibition of lotteries, the perpetual exclusion from the suffrage of all persons convicted of any infamous crime, or of the embezzlement or misappropriation of public money; and the placing the State university above the reach of the legislature, which can now neither terminate its existence nor modify its organization. This change has not been found to make the legislature less willing to aid the university. In 1887 an Act was passed imposing an *ad valorem* tax of one cent upon every $100 of taxable property, to be applied for the support of the University of California.

(*For some observations on this chapter by Mr. Denis Kearney himself, see note at the end of the volume.*)

CHAPTER XC

THE PROBLEM OF TERRITORIAL EXTENSION

When I began to write this book it was my purpose to include in it an account of some among the more important political and economic problems which occupy the thoughts of American statesmen. But now when I approach the end of my task I find that the changes which have passed within the last few years upon the aspect of these problems are so numerous that much of what I had meant to say would be no longer applicable; not to add that the events of the next few months may render obsolete remarks which would be true if printed to-day. I have therefore reluctantly abandoned the hope of using the materials which I had collected bearing upon the condition of the negroes in the South, upon the constitutional aspects of the Mormon question, upon tariff reform and civil service reform, upon the struggles of capital and labour. There remain, however, two or three questions of smaller importance, less involved with current politics, and altering less from year to year, on which a few words may be said. One of these relates to the possibilities of future territorial extension.

Occupying the whole width of their continent from ocean to ocean, the Americans have neighbours only on the north and on the south. It is only in these directions that they could extend themselves by land; and extension on land is much easier and more tempting than by sea. On the north they touch the great Canadian Confederation with its seven provinces, also extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and now bound together by a transcontinental railway. Its population, already about five millions, is rapidly increasing, especially in the North-west, and although legally subject to the British Crown and legislature, it is admittedly mistress of its own destinies. Fifty years ago it was deemed a matter of course that the United States would seek to annex Canada, peaceably if possible, but if not, then by force of arms. Even so late as 1864 Englishmen were constantly told that the first result of the triumph of the Federal armies in the War of Secession would be to launch a host flushed with victory against the Canadian Dominion, because when the passion for war has been once roused in a nation, it clamours for fresh conquests. Many were the arguments from history by which it was sought to convince England that for her own safety she ought to accede to the wily suggestions which Louis Napoleon addressed to her, deliver the Slave States from defeat and herself from a formidable rival. Since those days Canada has become a far more tempting prize, for her north-western territories between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, then believed to be condemned to sterility by their climate, have proved to be one of the richest wheat-growing districts on the continent. The power of the United States is now far greater than in 1865, nor would it be easy for England and Canada effectively to defend a frontier so long and so naturally weak as is that which separates the Dominion from its neighbours on the south. Yet now the annexation or absorption of Canada is little debated in the United States. If it comes about, it will come about at the wish and by the act of the Canadians themselves, rather than as the result of any external force.

There are several reasons for this. One is the growing friendliness of the Americans to England. Considering how much commoner than love is hatred, or at least jealousy, between nations, considering the proverbial bitterness of family quarrels, and considering how intense was the hatred felt in the United States towards England fifty years ago,[1] rekindled by the unhappy war of 1812, kept alive by the sensitiveness of the one people and the arrogance of the other, imprinted afresh on new generations in America by silly school-books and Fourth of July harangues, inflamed afresh by the language of a large section of English society during the Civil War, it is one of the remarkable events of our time that a cordial feeling should now exist between the two chief branches of the English race. The settlement of the Alabama claims has contributed to it. The democratization of England and the growth of literature and science in America have contributed to it. The greater respect which Europeans have come to show to America has contributed to it. But the ocean steamers have done perhaps most of all, because they have enabled the two peoples to know one another. The old motives for an attack upon Canada have therefore vanished. But there is reason to think that even if Canada were separated from the British Empire, the Americans would not be eager to bring her into the Union. They would not try to do so by force, because that would be contrary to their doctrines and habits. They have a well-grounded aversion, strengthened by their experience of the difficulties of ruling the South after 1865, to the incorporation or control of any community not anxious to be one with them and thoroughly in harmony with their own body. Although they would rejoice over so great an extension of their territory and resources, they are well satisfied with the present size and progress of their own country. Moreover, each of the two great parties has misgivings as to the effect which the addition of Canada might have on the political character of the electorate. The Democrats fear that the people of Ontario and Manitoba would secure preponderance to the Republicans. The Republicans are equally suspicious of the Roman Catholic French of Lower Canada. Neither party knows exactly how the tariff issues would be affected by the admission of a new multitude of voters. Both parties feel that a disturbing and unpredictable element would be introduced into their calculations. Hence, though neither can feel certain that it would lose, neither is sufficiently clear that it would gain to induce it to raise the question in a practical form.

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[1] De Tocqueville, for instance, says (ii. ch. 10): "On ne saurait voir de haine plus envenimée que celle qui existe entre les Américains des États Unis et les Anglais." And old men will tell you in America that their recollections are to the same effect.

The geographical position of Canada towards the United States, and particularly the increasingly close relations which must subsist between her Western provinces, Manitoba and British Columbia, and their Southern neighbours, may seem to suggest that sooner or later political union will come about. It need hardly be said that there is little difference between the populations, save that there is a stronger Scotch element in Western Canada than in Minnesota, Dakota, Montana, and Washington, where, especially in the two former, one finds far more Germans and Scandinavians than in Manitoba. Mr. Goldwin Smith has stated, with his usual brilliant lucidity, the reasons for expecting this, and has argued that it will be a benefit both to England

and to Canada.[1] I cannot, however, discover, nor do I understand him to maintain, that there is now any movement in either country aiming at this object. The material growth of Canada would probably be quickened by union, and the notion of a commercial league or customs union which has lately been discussed might lead to a political connection: indeed, it is hard to see how otherwise Canada could have her fair share in adjusting such tariff changes as might from time to time become necessary. But the present tariff arrangements are unstable in both countries; and, so far as a stranger can gather, the temper and feelings of the Canadians do not at present dispose them to desire absorption into the far larger mass of the United States, which they have hitherto regarded with some jealousy.

This is not the place for considering what are the interests in the matter of Great Britain and her other colonies. As regards the ultimate interests of the two peoples most directly concerned, it may be suggested that it is more to the advantage of both that they should for the present continue to develop independent types of political life and intellectual progress. Each may, in working out its own institutions, have something to teach the other. There is already too little variety on the American continent.

Fifteen hundred miles south of British Columbia the United States abut upon Mexico. The position of Mexico offers a striking contrast to that of Canada. The people are utterly unlike those of the United States; they are bigoted Roman Catholics, more than half Indian in blood and preserving many Indian superstitions, listless, uncultured, making little advance in self-government, whether local or national, increasing but slowly in numbers,[2] unprogressive in all directions. They do little to develop either the mineral or agricultural wealth of their superb territory, much of which, in fact all the interior plateau, enjoys a climate more favourable to physical exertion than that of the southernmost States of the Union. The export and import trade of the ports on the Gulf and the Pacific is in the hand of German and English houses: the mines of the north are worked by Americans, who come across from Texas and Arizona in greater and greater numbers. Three railways now pierce Northern Mexico from the Union, one reaching the Pacific at Guaymas on the Gulf of California, two others crossing the great plateau from the Rio Grande as far as the city of Mexico. The mining regions of Chihuahua and Sonora (the northernmost States of the Mexican federation) are already half American, for the capital is theirs, communications are worked by them, their language spreads, their influence becomes paramount. As the mines of Colorado and Arizona become less and less attractive, the stream of immigration will more and more set out of the United States across the border. If American citizens are killed, or their property attacked, the United States Government will be invoked, and will find difficulties in dealing with a weak government like the Mexican, which cannot keep order in its own dominions. It is far from improbable that the American settlers, as their numbers grow, will be tempted to establish order for themselves, and perhaps at last some sort of government. In fact, the process by which Texas was severed from Mexico and brought into the Union may conceivably be repeated in a more peaceful way. It is all but impossible for a feeble state, full of natural wealth which her people do not use, not to crumble under the impact of a stronger and more enterprising race. All experience points to the detachment of province after province from Mexico and its absorption into the American Union; nor when the process has once begun need it stop till, in a time to be measured rather by decades than by centuries, the petty republics of Central America have been also swallowed up and the predominant influence, if not the territorial frontier, of the United States has advanced to the isthmus of Panama.

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[1] In his book entitled *The Political Destiny of Canada*, published in 1878.

[2] The population of Mexico was, in 1884, 10,460,703, of whom 20 per cent are stated to be pure whites, 43 per cent of mixed race, and the remaining 37 per cent Indians.

If the United States were a despotic monarchy like Russia, this would certainly happen, happen not so much from any deliberate purpose of aggression as by the irresistible tendency of facts, a tendency similar to that which led Rome to conquer the East, England to conquer India, Russia to conquer north-western Asia. But the Americans are most unwilling that it should happen, and will do all they can to prevent it. They have none of that earth hunger which burns in the great nations of Europe, having already dominions which it may take a century to people fully. They are proud of the capacity of their present population for self-government. Their administrative system is singularly unfitted for the rule of dependencies, because it has no proper machinery for controlling provincial governors; so that when it finds regions which are hardly fit to be established as States, it nevertheless gives them a practically all but complete self-government as Territories. Administrative posts set up in a dependent country would certainly be jobbed, and the dependent country itself probably maladministered. Nearly all the work which the Federal authorities have had to do of this kind has been badly done, and has given rise to scandals. Hence the only form annexation can with advantage take is the admission of the annexed district as a self-governing State or Territory, the difference between the two being that in the latter the inhabitants, though they are usually permitted to govern their own community, have no vote in Federal elections. If Chihuahua and Sonora were like Dakota, the temptation to annex these provinces and turn them into States or Territories would be strong. But the Indo-Spaniards of Mexico have, in the sixty or seventy years that have passed since they revolted from Spain, shown little fitness for the exercise of political power. They are hardly more advanced in this direction than the Moors or the Burmese. They would be not only an inferior and diverse element in the Union, but a mischievous element, certain, if they were admitted to Federal suffrage, to injure Federal politics, to demoralize the officials who might be sent among them, and to supply a fertile soil for all kinds of roguery and rascality, which, so far as they lay within the sphere of State action, the Federal Government could not interfere with, and which in Federal affairs would damage Congress and bring another swarm of jobs and jobbers to Washington. Nearly eight millions of recently enfranchised negroes (not to speak of recent immigrants from Europe) are a heavy enough load for the Anglo-Americans to carry on their shoulders without the ignorance and semi-barbarism of the mixed races of the tropics.

One finds in the United States, and of course especially in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, many people who declare that Mexico will be swallowed, first the northern provinces, and the whole in time. It is "manifest destiny," and the land and mining-claim speculators of these border lands would be glad to help Destiny. But the general feeling of the nation is strongly against a forward policy, nor has either party any such interest in promoting it as the Southern slave-dealers had in bringing in Texas forty-five years ago. It cannot therefore be called a question of practical politics. Yet it is a problem which already deserves consideration, for the future in which it may become practical is not distant. It is a disquieting problem. The clearest judgment and the firmest will of a nation and its statesmen cannot always resist the drift of events and the working of natural causes.

There was a time when the United States seemed likely to acquire some of the West India islands. The South had a strong motive for bringing into the Union regions in which slavery prevailed, and which would have been admitted as Slave States. That motive has long since vanished: and so far as the South has now an interest in these isles it is that they should remain outside the line of American custom-houses, so that their products may not compete free of duty with those which the South raises. All the objections which apply to the incorporation of Northern Mexico apply with greater force to the incorporation of islands far less fit for colonization by the Anglo-American race than are the Mexican table-lands.

There is, however, one spot beyond the limits of the North American continent in which Americans declare that they feel directly interested. This is the island group of Hawaii, which lies 2000 miles to the south-west of San Francisco. Great as this distance is, the Americans conceive that the position of these isles over against their own Western coast would be so threatening to their commerce in a war between the United States and any naval power, that they cannot suffer the islands to be occupied by, or even to fall under the influence of, any European nation. No European nation has so far betrayed any design of acquiring such an influence. However, the United States Government, wishful to provide against emergencies, has endeavoured to purchase land at Pearl River in Oahu, reputed the best harbour in the islands, with the view of establishing a naval station there.

To forecast the future of the Hawaiian kingdom is by no means easy.

The population is at present (census of 1884) 80,000, of whom 36,000 are native Hawaiians, 18,000 Chinese, 10,000 Portuguese (recently imported to work the sugar plantations), and nearly 7000 Europeans, mostly of American origin, with however a good many Englishmen and Germans. The control of affairs is practically in the hands of the whites, American and British, though Portuguese as well as native Hawaiians enjoy the suffrage. Things have gone on well since the late Prime Minister was expelled by a sort of bloodless revolution; and the ruling white population, which is of a good type, and has kept free from scandals such as gather round the politics of San Francisco, is likely to administer the islands with success. But when the native race, which Captain Cook estimated at 300,000, has sunk to one half or less of its present number, as it seems likely in a few years to do, it will be difficult to maintain a native dynasty, or indeed a monarchy of any kind: and the alternative of an independent republic or of annexation to the United States will present itself. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is no wish on the part of the United States to acquire the islands and admit them to the Union as a State or Territory; their white population is at present too small to make either course desirable; and in case of war with a naval power the obligation of defending them might be found burdensome. It is, however, certain that the Americans would not stand by and see any other nation establish a protectorate over them.

The fate of Western South America belongs to a still more distant future; but it can hardly remain unconnected with what is already by far the greatest power in the Western hemisphere. When capital, which is accumulating in the United States with extraordinary rapidity, is no longer able to find highly profitable employment in the development of Western North America, it will tend to seek other fields. When population has filled up the present territory of the United States, enterprising spirits will overflow into undeveloped regions. The nearest of these is Western South America, the elevated plateaux of which are habitable by Northern races. It may be conjectured that the relations of the vast territories in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia,[1] for which the Spaniards have done so little, and which can hardly remain for ever neglected, will one day become far closer with the United States than with any European power.

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[1] These three countries have a total area of about 1,500,000 square miles, with a population not exceeding 5,500,000, besides an unascertained number of uncivilized Indians.

CHAPTER XCI

LAISSEZ FAIRE

AN English friend of a philosophic turn of mind bade me, when he heard that I was writing this book, dedicate at least one chapter to the American theory of the State. When I answered that the Americans had no theory of the State, and felt no need for one, being content, like the English, to base their constitutional ideas upon law and history, he rejoined that people in America must at least have some general views about the functions of government and its relations to the individual. "We are told," he continued, "that the whole American polity is more coherent, more self-consistent than that of England; it must therefore have what the Germans call 'ground-ideas.' There is a profusion of legislation. Legislation must proceed upon these ideas, and by examining the current legislation of the Federal government and of the States you will be able to discover and present the beliefs and notions regarding the State which the Americans cherish."

The term "ground-ideas" does not happily describe the doctrines that prevail in the United States, for the people are not prone to form or state their notions in a philosophic way. There are, however, certain dogmas or maxims which are in so far fundamental that they have told widely on political thought, and that one usually strikes upon them when sinking a shaft, so to speak, into an American mind. Among such dogmas are the following:—

Certain rights of the individual, as, for instance, his right to the enjoyment of what he has earned, to the free expression of opinion, are primordial and sacred.

All political power springs from the people, and the most completely popular government is best.

Legislatures, officials, and all other agents of the sovereign people ought to be strictly limited by law, by each other, and by the shortness of the terms of office.

Where any function can be equally well discharged by a central or by a local body, it ought by preference to be entrusted to the local body, for a centralized administration is more likely to be tyrannical, inefficient, and impure than one which, being on a small scale, is more fully within the knowledge of the citizens and more sensitive to their opinion.

Two men are wiser than one, one hundred than ninety-nine, thirty millions than twenty-nine millions. Whether they are wiser or not, the will of the larger number must prevail against the will of the smaller. But the majority is not wiser because it is called the Nation, or because it controls the government, but only because it is more numerous. The nation is nothing but so many individuals. The government is nothing but certain representatives and officials, agents who are here to-day and gone to-morrow.

The less of government the better; that is to say, the fewer occasions for interfering with individual citizens are allowed to officials, and the less time citizens have to spend in looking after their officials, so much the more will the citizens and the community prosper. The functions of government must be kept at their minimum.

The first five of these dogmas have been discussed and illustrated in earlier chapters. The last of them needs a little examination, because it suggests points of comparison with the Old World, and because the meaning of it lies in the application. It is all very well to say that the functions of government should be kept at a minimum; but the bureaucrats of Russia might say the same. What is this minimum? Every nation, every government, every philosopher has his own view as to the functions which it must be taken to include.

The doctrine of *Laissez faire*, or non-interference by government with the citizen, has two foundations, which may be called the sentimental and the rational. The sentimental ground is the desire of the individual to be let alone, to do as he pleases, indulge his impulses, follow out his projects. The rational ground is the principle, gathered from an observation of the phenomena of society, that interference by government more often does harm than good—that is to say, that the desires and impulses of men when left to themselves are more likely by their natural collision and co-operation to work out a happy result for the community and the individuals that compose it than will be attained by the conscious endeavours of the state controlling and directing those desires and impulses. There are laws of nature governing mankind as well as the material world; and man will thrive better under these laws than under those which he makes for himself through the organization we call government.

Of these two views, the former or sentimental has been extremely strong in America, being rooted in the character and habits of the race, and seeming to issue from that assertion of individual liberty which is proclaimed in such revered documents as the Declaration of Independence and the older State constitutions. The latter view, incessantly canvassed in Europe, has played no great part in the United States; or rather it has appeared in the form not of a philosophic induction from experience, but of a common-sense notion that everybody knows his own business best, that individual enterprise has "made America," and will "run America," better than the best government could do.

The State governments of 1776 and the National government of 1789 started from habits and ideas similar to those of contemporary England. Now England in the eighteenth century was that one among European countries in which government had the narrowest sphere. The primitive paternal legislation of the later middle ages had been abandoned. The central government had not begun to stretch out its arms to interfere with quarter sessions in the counties, or municipal corporations in the towns, to care for the health, or education, or morals of the people. That strengthening and reorganization of administration which was in progress in many parts of the continent, as in Prussia under Frederick the Great, and in Portugal under Pombal, had not spread to England, and would have been resisted there by men of conservative tendencies for one set of reasons, and men of liberal tendencies for another. Everything tended to make the United States in this respect more English than England, for the circumstances of colonial life, the process of settling the western wilderness, the feelings evoked by the struggle against George III., all went to intensify individualism, the love of enterprise, the pride in personal freedom. And from that day to this, individualism, the love of enterprise, and the pride in personal freedom, have been deemed by Americans not only their choicest, but their peculiar and exclusive possessions.

The hundred years which have passed since the birth of the Republic have, however, brought many changes with them. Individualism is no longer threatened by arbitrary kings, and the ramparts erected to protect it from their attacks are useless and grass-grown. If any assaults are to be feared they will come from another quarter. New causes are at work in the world tending not only to lengthen the arms of government, but to make its touch quicker and firmer. Do these causes operate in America as well as in Europe? and if so, does America, in virtue of her stronger historical attachment to individualism, oppose a more effective resistance to them?

I will mention a few among them. Modern civilization, in becoming more complex and refined, has become more exacting. It discerns more benefits which the organized power of government can secure, and grows more anxious to attain them. Men live fast, and are impatient of the slow working of natural laws. The triumphs of physical science have enlarged their desires for comfort, and shown them how many things may be accomplished by the application of collective skill and large funds which are beyond the reach of individual effort. Still greater has been the influence of a quickened moral sensitiveness and philanthropic sympathy. The sight of preventible evil is painful, and is felt as a reproach. He who preaches patience and reliance upon natural progress is thought callous. The sense of sin may, as theologians tell us, be declining; but the dislike to degrading and brutalizing vice is increasing: there is a warmer recognition of the responsibility of each man for his neighbour, and a more earnest zeal in works of moral reform. Some doctrines which, because they had satisfied philosophers, were in the last generation accepted by the bulk of educated men, have now become, if not discredited by experience, yet far from popular. They are thought to be less universally true, less completely beneficial, than was at first supposed. There are benefits which the laws of demand and supply do not procure. Unlimited competition seems to press too hardly on the weak. The power of groups of men organized by incorporation as joint-stock companies, or of small knots of rich men acting in combination, has developed with unexpected strength in unex pected ways, overshadowing individuals and even communities, and showing that the very freedom of association which men sought to secure by law when they were threatened by the violence of potentates may, under the shelter of the law, ripen into a new form of tyranny. And in some countries, of which England may be taken as the type, the transference of political power from the few to the many has made the many less jealous of governmental authority. The government is now their creature, their instrument—why should they fear to use it? They may strip it to-morrow of the power with which they have clothed it to-day. They may rest confident that its power will not be used contrary to the wishes of the majority among themselves. And as it is in this majority that authority has now been vested, they readily assume that the majority will be right.

How potent these influences and arguments have proved in the old countries of Europe, how much support they receive not only from popular sentiment, but from the writings of a vigorous school of philosophical economists, all the world knows. But what of newer communities, where the evils to be combated by state action are fewer, where the spirit of liberty and the sentiment of individualism are more intense? An eminent English statesman expresses the general belief of Englishmen when he says—

> "How is it that while the increasing democracy at home is insisting, with such growing eagerness, on more control by the state, we see so small a corresponding development of the same principle in the United States or in Anglo-Saxon colonies? It is clearly not simply the democratic spirit which demands so much central regulation. Otherwise we should find the same conditions in the Anglo-Saxon democracies across the seas."[1]

This belief of Englishmen is also the general belief of Americans. I suppose that nine men out of ten would tell a stranger that both the Federal government and the State governments interfered little, and would ascribe the prosperity of the country to this non-interference as well as to the self-reliant spirit of the people. So far as there can be said to be any theory on the subject in a land which gets on without theories, *laissez aller* is the orthodox and accepted doctrine in the sphere both of Federal and of State legislation.

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[1] Mr. Goschen, in an instructive address delivered at Edinburgh in 1883, on *Laissez faire* and government interference.

Nevertheless the belief is groundless. The new democracies of America are just as eager for state interference as the democracy of England, and try their experiments with even more light-hearted promptitude. No one need be surprised at this when he reflects that the causes which have been mentioned as telling on Europe, tell on the United States with no less force. Men are even more eager than in Europe to hasten on to the ends they desire, even more impatient of the delays which a reliance on natural forces involves, even more sensitive to the wretchedness of their fellows, and to the mischiefs which vice and ignorance breed. Unrestricted competition has shown its dark side: great corporations have been more powerful than in England, and more inclined to abuse their power. Having lived longer under a democratic government, the American masses have realized more perfectly than those of Europe that they are themselves the government. Their absolute command of its organization (except where constitutional checks are interposed) makes them turn more quickly to it for the accomplishment of their purposes. And in the State legislatures they possess bodies with which it is easy to try legislative experiments, since these bodies, though not of themselves disposed to innovation, are mainly composed of men unskilled in economics, inapt to foresee any but the nearest consequences of their measures, prone to gratify any whim of their constituents, and open to the pressure of any section whose self-interest or impatient philanthropy clamours for some departure from the general principles of legislation. For crotchet-mongers as well as for intriguers there is no such paradise as the lobby of a State legislature. No responsible statesman is there to oppose them, no warning voice will be raised by a scientific economist.

Thus it has come to pass that, though the Americans conceive themselves to be devoted to *laissez faire* in theory, and to be in practice the most self-reliant of peoples, they have grown no less accustomed than the English to carry the action of the State into ever-widening fields. Economic theory did not stop them, for practical men are proud of getting on without theory.[1] The sentiment of individualism did not stop them, because State intervention has usually taken the form of helping or protecting the greater number, while restraining the few; and personal freedom of action, the love of which is strong enough to repel the paternalism of France or Germany, has been infringed upon only at the bidding of a strong moral sentiment, such as that which condemns intemperance. So gradual has been the process of transition to this new habit that few but lawyers and economists have yet become aware of it, and the lamentations with which old-fashioned English thinkers accompany the march of legislation are in America scarcely heard and wholly unheeded.

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[1] Till recently, there has been little theoretical discussion of these questions in the United States. At present the two tendencies, that of *Laissez faire* and that which leans to State interference, are well represented by able writers.

As the field of ordinary private law and administration belongs to the States, it is chiefly in State legislation that we must look for instances of governmental intervention. They are so numerous and various that it is hard to select the most salient. I give at the end of this chapter seven tables which present a comparison of the legislation of six typical States, and of Congress, with British statutes bearing on the same topics. But many other, and sometimes more singular, illustrations of the tendency to do by law what men were formerly left to do for themselves, and to prohibit by law acts of omission and commission which used to pass unregarded, might be culled from the statute-books of nearly every commonwealth.[1] I have collected some instances in a note to this chapter. It is in the West, which plumes itself on being pre-eminently the land of freedom, enterprise, and self-help, that this tendency is most active, and plays the strangest pranks, because, in the West, legislators are more impatient and self-confident than elsewhere.

The forms which legislative intervention takes may be roughly classified under the following heads:—

Prohibitions to individuals to do acts which are not, in the ordinary sense of the word, criminal (*e.g.* to sell intoxicating liquors, to employ a labourer for more than so many hours in a day).

Directions to individuals to do things which it is not obviously wrong to omit (*e.g.* to provide seats for shop-women, to publish the accounts of a railway company).

Interferences with the ordinary course of law in order to protect individuals from the consequences of their own acts (*e.g.* the annulment of contracts between employer and workmen making the former not liable for accidental injuries to the latter, the exemption of homesteads, or of a certain amount of personal property, from the claims of creditors, the prohibition of more than a certain rate of interest on money).

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[1] See an interesting article in the *Contemporary Review* for May 1887, by Dr. A. Shaw, entitled "The American State and the American Man."

Directions to a public authority to undertake work which might be left to individual action and the operation of supply and demand (*e.g.* the providing of schools and dispensaries, the establishment of State analysts, State oil inspectors, the collection and diffusion, at the public expense, of statistics).

In every one of these kinds of legislative interference the Americans, or at least the Western States, seem to have gone farther than the English Parliament. The restrictions on the liquor traffic have been more sweeping; those upon the labour of women and children, and of persons employed by the State, not less so. Moral duties are more frequently enforced by legal penalties than in England. Railroads, insurance and banking companies, and other corporations are, in most States, strictly regulated. Efforts to protect individuals coming under the third head are so frequent and indulgent that their policy is beginning to be seriously questioned.[1] Gratuitous elementary and secondary education is provided all over the Union, and in the West there are also gratuitous State universities open to women as well as to men. And although the State has not gone so far in superseding individual action as to create for itself monopolies, it is apt to spend money on some objects not equally cared for by European governments. It tries to prevent adulteration by putting its stamp on agricultural fertilizers, and prohibiting the sale of oleomargarine; it establishes dairy commissions and bureaux of animal industry, it distributes seed to farmers, subsidizes agricultural fairs, sends round lecturers on agriculture, and encourages by bounties the culture of beetroot, tree-planting, and the killing of noxious animals. The farmer of Kansas or Iowa is as much the object of the paternal solicitude of his legislature as the farmer of any European country. And in the pursuit of its schemes for blessing the community the State raises a taxation which would be complained of in a less prosperous country.[1]

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[1] "A numerous and ever-increasing list of possessions has been entirely exempted from execution for debt, starting with the traditional homestead, and going on through all the necessities of life, implements of trade, and even corner-lots and money, until, in some States, as in Texas, almost every conceivable object of desire, from a house and corner-lot to a span of fast horses, may be held and enjoyed by the poor man free from all claims of his creditors. Without going further into details it may be boldly stated that the tendency of democratic legislation on this subject has been to require the repayment of debts only when it can be made out of superfluous accumulated capital."—Mr. F. J. Stimson, in a vigorous and thoughtful article on the "Ethics of Democracy," in *Scribner's Magazine* for June 1887.

I find in the latest Constitution of Texas a provision that where a contractor becomes bankrupt, the labourers employed by him shall have a right of action against the company or person for whose benefit the work on which they were employed was done.

What has been the result of this legislation? Have the effects which the economists of the physiocratic or *laissez aller* school taught us to expect actually followed? Has the natural course of commerce and industry been disturbed, has the self-helpfulness of the citizen been weakened, has government done its work ill and a new door to jobbery been opened? It is still too soon to form conclusions on these points. Some few of the experiments have failed, others seem to be succeeding; but the policy of State interference as a whole has not yet been adequately tested. In making this new departure American legislatures are serving the world, if not their own citizens, for they are providing it with a store of valuable data for its instruction, data which deserve more attention than they have hitherto received, and whose value will increase as time goes on.

It is the privilege of these unconscious philosophers to try experiments with less risk than countries like France or England would have to run, for the bodies on which the experiments are tried are so relatively small and exceptionally vigorous that failures need not inflict permanent injury. No people is shrewder than the American in perceiving when a law works ill, nor prompter in repealing it.

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[1] "Speaking broadly, and including indirect taxation, it may be stated that the laws now purport to give the State power to dispose of at least one-third the annual revenues of property. . . . Of course these taxes are largely, by the richest citizens, evaded, but upon land at least they are effectual. It is certainly understating it to say that the general taxation upon land equals one-third the net rents, *i.e.* Ricardo's margin of cultivation less expenses of management."—Stimson, *ut supra*

SEVEN TABLES[1]

ILLUSTRATING IN SOME POINTS THE EXTENT OF GOVERNMENTAL INTERFERENCE IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.[2]

[An asterisk (*) is used in the tables to indicate that some interference takes place: where necessary, a note is appended to make clear the nature or degree of this interference.]

I. Public Health.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Penalty for selling unwholesome food . .	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
a. Sale of oleomargarine .	*	*	* a	*	*	* b	*	* c
2. Adulteration prohibited on penalty.								
α. Food . .	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
β. Milk . .	*	*	*	*	*	d	d	
γ. Liquor . .	*	*	* e	*	*	*	*	
δ. Drugs and medicines .	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
3. Sanitary regulations for buildings, etc. .	local f	local	local	local g	local	local	local h	
4. Vaccination . .	*	* i	k		* l	* m	n	

Notes.—*a.* The sale of oleomargarine is prohibited in Pennsylvania. *b.* Not only is the sale of oleomargarine forbidden unless distinctly marked, but proprietors of public-houses must notify guests by public notices and by mention on the bill of fare if oleomargarine is used at their houses. *c.* By a Federal statute of 1886 oleomargarine manufacturers are heavily taxed, and the making of the article is placed under the surveillance of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, very heavy penalties being imposed on fraud. The oleomargarine tax produced in 1887 $435,924. *d.* Adulteration of any article of food or drink is prohibited, but no special regulations exist concerning milk. *e.* Liquor casks must bear signed statement that they contain no deleterious matter. *f.* Regulations especially stringent in London. Local Government Board has supervision over local sanitary authorities. *g.* In cities of 50,000 inhabitants or over, plans for any projected "tenement, lodging-house, or other places," must be submitted to the health commissioners of such cities for approval or rejection; the plumbing for such buildings must be done under written instructions from the health commissioners, who are to inspect the same before it is covered up. *h.* Registration of plumbers. *i.* Regulations especially strict. *k.* The board of health is to "afford inducements and facilities for general and gratuitous vaccination." *l.* Except for school children, vaccination is compulsory only where contagion is known or feared. *m.* County and city boards of education are given power to make regulations concerning the vaccination of pupils in their respective schools, and may require vaccination as a pre-requisite to admission. In Chatham County (Savannah) vaccination is compulsory. *n.* The State vaccine agent is to provide regular practitioners with vaccine.

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[1] Copyright, by Allanson Bigelow Houghton, 1888.

[2] I am indebted for the facts in these Tables to the kindness of Mr. A. B. Houghton of Harvard University, and have also to thank my friends, Mr. F. C. Montague of Oriel College, Oxford, for the trouble he has taken, in conjunction with Mr. Houghton, in arranging the facts, and Mr. Alfred Marshall, professor of political economy at Cambridge, England, for some helpful suggestions.

II. Professions.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Teachers in public schools[1]—certificates required for	*a*	* *b*	*	*	*	*	*	
2. Qualifications prescribed for—								
a. Physicians and Surgeons . . .	* *c*		* *d*	* *d*	* *d*	* *d*	* *d*	
β. Pharmacists . .	*	*	*	*	*	*		
γ. Dentists . . .		*	*	*	*	*	*	
3. Legal practitioners—prescribed requisites for admission . . .	*	* *e*	* *f*	* *g*	* *h*	* *i*	* *k*	

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[1] State or district provided public schools only are here referred to.

Notes.—*a.* The parliamentary grant can be earned by an elementary school only by conforming to the conditions laid down by the Education Department, and these include the provision of a qualified staff of teachers. *b.* In Massachusetts, as in the other States, the State merely prescribes that a certificate or a licence must be held, while its issue, etc., is entrusted to various local authorities. *c.* Until registered in legal form, a practitioner cannot recover fees for medical service rendered, or hold any public medical appointments. *d.* The practice of medicine is prohibited to any except those properly qualified and licensed. In Illinois, itinerant vendors of any drug or nostrum, and persons publicly professing to cure disease by such means, are to pay a licence duty of $100 per month. *e.* A Supreme Judge or Supreme Court may admit upon examination. *f.* Judges may admit "persons of an honest disposition and learned in the law." *g.* A licence must be obtained from two Justices of the Supreme Court of Illinois. *h.* The Court of Appeals establishes rules for examinations. *i.* Applicants must, after having "read law," pass an examination in open court, or must possess a diploma from one of the two law schools in the State. *k.* Regulations for admission left to Court, which prescribes list of books for examination.

III. REGULATION OF LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Licence required for selling liquor . . .	*	* *a*	*	*	*	*	*	
2. Local Option[1] . .		*	*b*	* *c*	*	*d*	*e*	
3. Regulation of traffic[2] .	*	*	* *f*	* *g*	* *h*	* *i*	*	

[1] Each locality decides for itself whether the sale of liquor shall be permitted within its area.

[2] Regulation—*i.e.* hours of sale, Sunday closing, selling to minors or habitual drunkards, etc.

Notes.—*a.* The State has twice totally prohibited the sale of liquor, and has twice rescinded the prohibition. *b.* In 1872 Pennsylvania passed a law by which every third year the question of granting licences was to be submitted to a popular vote. The Supreme Court declared a similar law unconstitutional—because the law-making power is vested in the legislature, not in the people themselves, and the legislature cannot delegate such power,—while a learned court, the Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia, pronounced it constitutional, so that the constitutionality of the law was left in doubt; and in 1875 it was repealed. *c.* Local authorities may not fix annual licence fee at less than $500. *d.* Power to grant or refuse licences is in hands of local authorities. *e.* California went through an experience similar to that of Pennsylvania. In 1874 a local option law was passed, and in 1876, having been pronounced unconstitutional, it was repealed. *f.* The quarter-sessions must issue a licence to any applicant who fulfils the legal conditions, unless a petition against granting it is handed in. *g.* Liquor dealers are held responsible for damage done by persons who have become intoxicated on liquor sold by them, and the owner or lessee of the premises is also held responsible if he knowingly allowed such sale to take place. *h.* The sale of liquor to an Indian, minor, or habitual drunkard, after notice is given (as, for instance, by a wife who has served notice on the liquor-sellers that her husband is such a drunkard) is illegal. No liquor may be sold on election days near the polling-places. The responsibility of owner or lessee is similar to that established in Illinois. *i.* A person taking out a licence must execute a bond conditioned on keeping an orderly house, and on not supplying minors without consent of parents or guardians.

IV. INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Banks		*	*		*	*	*	
2. Savings Banks .		*	*	*	*		*	
3. Insurance Companies .		*	*	*	*	* *a*	*	
4. Benefit Societies, etc. .	*				* *b*		* *c*	
5. Railroads (*vide* Table V.)		*	* *d*	*	*	*	*	

Notes.—*a.* Insurance companies must make semi-annual returns. *b.* The State prescribes the inspection of accounts of benefit societies where sick benefits do not exceed $250 per annum for one person (but this provision is *not* to include Oddfellows or Masons). Co-operative loan associations are also subject to inspection. *c.* The bank commissioners inspect the accounts of loan societies. The governor may order the inspection of the accounts of any corporation by the attorney-general. *d.* Returns must be made to the State in prescribed form.

V. Railroads.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Board of Railroad Commissioners . .	*	*	*a*	**b*	*	*	*	**c*
2. Powers of Board.								
a. Judicial . . .	*	**d*		*		*	*	
β. To correct abuses, *e.g.* extortion, etc., .	*	*e*	*f*	*	*g*	*	**h*	**i*
γ. To regulate charges .		*k*		**l*	*m*	**n*	**o*	**p*
δ. To inspect accounts .	**q*	*	*r*	**s*	**s*	**t*	*	**w*
ε. To decide as to the construction of new roads	*y*	*						

Notes.—*a.* No board of railroad commissioners. *b.* The board is given certain powers for the regulation and inspection of public warehouses for grain. *c.* Inter-State Commerce Act of 1887. The board consists of five commissioners, with six years' term, and $7500 salary. The powers of the board apply to routes by rail, or by water and rail, extending from one State to another, or to a foreign country; but *not* to routes lying wholly within one State. Penalties are prescribed for breach of law, and the board is to see to their enforcement. Persons aggrieved may sue for damages, or complain to the board, which can institute proceedings in the United States courts if, on examination, it finds the complaints sustained. *d.* The board is given power to decide in certain disputes, and in certain matters relative to the construction of railroads. *e.* In case of abuse, the board is to complain to company and, if complaint is not heeded, to request the attorney-general to institute proceedings against such company. Whether or not such suit shall be brought rests with the attorney-general. *f.* The State prohibits discrimination, unequal concessions in rates and drawbacks, and undue discrimination between individuals and companies. *g.* The State prescribes that companies undertaking to transport immigrants must have registered rates of fare, and also that tickets may be sold to immigrants only in places appointed by the committee of immigration. *h.* If rates or fares are lowered for competitive purposes, they cannot again be raised without consent of the governmental authority in which is vested the power to regulate rates and fares. *i.* All charges must be "reasonable and just"; no discrimination is to be allowed between individuals for similar service. *k.* Rates and fares may be fixed by the directors of railroad corporations, but these are subject to revision by the general court, or by officials appointed by it. Every corporation whose road runs out of Boston must have cheap morning and evening trains at such hours as shall be fixed by the board. The State prescribes the maximum limits for fares on such trains. *l.* The board fixes maximum limits for fares and rates. *m.* The legislature may reduce the fares, rates, or other profits of any railroad built after 1844, provided that these, unless by consent of the railroad company, be not so reduced as to produce, with the said profits, less than 10 per cent on the capital actually invested, nor unless it is ascertained that the company has from all sources a net income of more than 10 per cent. *n.* The maximum rates and fares are fixed by the board; but the board cannot in any way abridge or control the rates and fares charged by companies carrying goods or passengers at less than local charges either beyond, or from beyond within, the boundaries of the State. *o.* The board fixes rates and fares. *p.* It is forbidden to charge more for a shorter than a longer distance in the same direction, if the shorter distance is included in the longer, and the other conditions similar. But the board is given power in special cases to raise this prohibition. No "pooling of freights" is allowed. *q.* The companies must furnish the Board of Trade with returns of capital, traffic, and working expenses, also with notice of accidents. *r.* The State prescribes a blank form in which companies must fill out their annual report. *s.* The board prescribes a blank form in which companies must fill out their annual report. *t.* All contracts between companies concerning rates of freight and passenger traffic, and all agreements between competing companies within the State concerning the division of earnings must receive the approval of the board before becoming valid. *w.* All tariffs and agreements must be filed with the board. Schedules of rates and fares must be printed and posted; and the same may not be reduced without ten days' notice. *y.* This function is partly discharged by the committees of both Houses of Parliament before which railway bills go, and partly by the Board of Trade, the ultimate decision of course resting with Parliament.

VI. Ships and Seamen.

	United Kingdom.	United States.	California.	Massachusetts.	New York.	Georgia.	Illinois.	Pennsylvania.
1. Protection for Seamen—								
α. While at sea,[1]	*	*						
β. While ashore,[2]	*	*	*	*	*a	*b		
γ. Regarding wages	*	*	*c					
δ. Destitute seamen	*	*						
2. Inspection of—								
α. Steam vessels: of hulls, etc.; of boilers, etc.	*	*						
β. Sailing vessels	*	*d	*d					
3. Regulation of passenger traffic.								
α. Number of passengers allowed	*	*						
β. Life-saving apparatus, etc.	*	*						
4. Regulation of freight, traffic, *e.g.* overloading, etc.	*	*						
5. Licensing of officers, engineers, and pilots	*	*						

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[1] All reasonable care, *i.e.* in regard to space, accommodation, provisions, medical treatment, etc., must be taken of seamen while on voyage.

[2] Licensing of sailors' boarding-houses, etc.; enticing sailors to desert; hospital dues, etc.

Notes.—a. Stringent regulations regarding the licensing of sailors' boarding-houses in New York and Brooklyn. *b.* Tippling-house keepers may not sell more than 30 cents' worth of intoxicating liquor to any seaman who has signed articles. *c.* A sailor cannot enter into any agreement whereby he forfeits either his lien on the ship, or any remedy for recovery of wages, or his wages in case of loss of ship; or whereby he abandons any claims to salvage. *d.* No one can be forced to go to sea in an unseaworthy ship, and a proper inspection must be made on demand.

VII.—INDUSTRY.

	United Kingdom.	Massachusetts.	Pennsylvania.	Illinois.	New York.	Georgia.	California.	United States.
1. Hours of Labour, regulation of—								
α. Children . . .	* *a*	* *b*	* *c*		* *d*	* *e*	* *f*	
β. Minors . . .	* *a*	* *b*	* *c*			* *e*		
γ. Women . . .	* *a*	* *b*	*g*	*h*	*k*		*l*	
δ. Men . . .			*g*	*h*	*k*		*l*	* *m*
2. Inspection of Factories and Workshops . .	*	*	*n*		*			
3. Board of Labour Arbitration . . .		* *o*			* *p*			

Notes.—*a.* Children under 10 years of age are not to be employed at all; children under 14 years are not to be employed more than half time. Minors under 18 years, and women of any age are not to be employed more than 10 hours a day. *b.* Regulations substantially those of United Kingdom. *c.* Children under 13 years are not to be employed at all; minors under 16 years may be employed but 9 months in year, and then only on condition that they attend school the rest of the year. *d.* Children under 13 years are not to be employed at all. *e.* The hours of labour in cotton, woollen, and other manufacturing establishments, and in machine shops, for minors under 21 years are from sunrise to sunset, with the customary allowance for meals; and contracts with parents for such services for a longer time are void. *f.* Children may not be employed for more than 8 hours a day except in agricultural or domestic work. *g.* Eight hours constitutes a day's work when no contract exists to the contrary. But this does not apply to farm labour, nor to service by the year, month, or week; nor does it exclude contracts for extra time and extra pay. *h.* An 8 hours' law similar to that of Pennsylvania. *k.* Eight hours constitutes a day's work when no contract exists to the contrary, except in the case of farm or domestic labour. The act applies to all mechanics, working men, and labourers employed by the State or by municipal corporations, or in the employ of persons contracting with the State or municipal corporations, for the performance of public works. *l.* Eight hours constitutes a day's work unless otherwise stipulated by the contracting parties; and in all cases for labour performed under State or municipal authority. *m.* In 1840 President Van Buren decreed that 10 hours should constitute a work-day in all the workshops of the United States. After various vicissitudes, this decree, by the laws of 21st December 1861 and 16th July 1862, was set aside, and in its place Congress ordered that the standard for both the length of the working day and the wages for the same in all Government workshops should be that usual in private undertakings. Later, on 23d June 1868, an 8 hours' law was passed by which it was enacted that 8 hours should constitute a day's work for all labourers, working men, and mechanics in the employment of the United States. Unhappily, nothing was said in the law concerning the amount of wages, and a controversy immediately sprang up as to whether or no wages should remain at their former level. And on 21st May 1869, President Grant decreed that wages should not be reduced on account of any reduction in the hours of labour. From the very beginning, the law was not strictly executed, and petitions were continually pouring in on Congress, complaining of its violation. Finally, in 1876, the law was brought before the United States Supreme Court, and in October of that year, the Court declared that the law was in no sense a compact with the workmen, but merely a general rule laid down by the United States; and that the government officials were therefore at their discretion free to hire workmen for a longer or shorter day. This really broke down the law. The Navy Department early in 1878 declared that, while it would accept 8 hours as a full day's work, a corresponding increase of wages would be paid to those working 10 hours. And the Attorney-General pronounced this legal, because the law merely prescribed a normal day's work, but did not exclude contracts by which other hours of service might be fixed. Several attempts (in 1874, 1880, 1884) have been made to make the nominal limitations of 8 hours effectual. But as yet they have uniformly failed. *n.* The Fire Commissioners see to the sufficiency of the provisions against fire in all buildings where operatives are permanently employed in the third or any higher story. Pennsylvania has also an elaborate system of mining regulations: the inspectors are given power to stop the working of mines found dangerous. *o.* The Governor appoints yearly a Board of Arbitration consisting of three members, and this board has jurisdiction over the entire State. Submission of disputes and grievances is voluntary, but only such questions can be submitted as may not be the subject of a civil suit or bill in equity, and then only when the dispute is between employés and an employer who has at least 25 men in the same line of work. The decision of the board is final upon both parties for 6 months, or until either party shall give notice in writing that it will not be bound thereby at the end of 60 days. *p.* The Governor appoints yearly a Board of Arbitration consisting of three members, whose sole duty it is to hear and pass upon appeals made from the awards of the local board. The decision of the State board is final and conclusive. The local boards are created by each of the parties to a dispute appointing two members and these four then choosing a fifth. The board, on being licensed by the county judges, is ready to act. The local board ceases to exist immediately on rendering its decision.

NOTE

I collect a few instances of recent legislation illustrating the tendency to extend State intervention and the scope of penal law:—

New York provides that no guest shall be excluded from any hotel on account of race, creed, or colour.

Wisconsin requires every hotel above a certain height to be furnished with fireproof staircases.

Michigan compels railroad companies to provide automatic car couplings, so that employés shall not need to go between the cars. Other States direct the use of certain kinds of brakes.

Georgia orders railway companies to put up a bulletin stating how much any train already half an hour late is overdue.

Massachusetts forbids the employment of colour-blind persons on railways, and provides for the examination of those so employed.

Several States order employers to find seats for women employed in shops, warehouses, or manufactories.

Massachusetts compels corporations to pay workmen weekly.

Maryland institutes a "State Board of Commissioners of Practical Plumbing," and confines the practice of that industry to persons licensed by the same.

Kansas punishes the making any misrepresentation to or deceiving any person in the sale of fruit or shade trees, shrubs or bulbs; and New Jersey does the like as regards fruit trees or briars.

Mississippi punishes with fine and imprisonment any legislative, executive, judicial, or ministerial officer, who shall travel on any railroad without paying absolutely, and without any evasion whatever, the same fare as is required of passengers generally.

Several States offer bounties on the raising of jute, flax, and hemp.

Texas makes it a punishable misdemeanour to deal in "futures" or "keep any 'bucket shop' or other establishment where future contracts are bought or sold with no intention of an actual delivery of the article so bought or sold."

Georgia imposes on dealers in "futures" a tax of $500 a year.

Michigan prescribes a system of minority voting at the election of directors of joint stock corporations.

Pennsylvania forbids the consolidation of telegraph companies.

Ohio punishes by fine and imprisonment the offering to sell "options," or exhibiting any quotations of the prices of "margins," "futures," or "options."

Colorado, Kansas, North Carolina, make the seduction under promise of marriage of any chaste woman a felony.

New York punishes with fine and imprisonment any person "who shall send a letter with intent to cause annoyance to any other person."

Illinois and Arizona forbid marriages between first cousins.

Nebraska prohibits the sale of tobacco to minors, and Iowa punishes the giving or selling of pistols to them.

Kentucky prohibits the sale of any book or periodical, "the chief feature of which is to record the commission of crimes, or display by cuts or illustrations of crimes committed, or the pictures of criminals, desperadoes, or fugitives from justice, or of men or women influenced by stimulants."

Massachusetts compels insurance companies to insure the lives of coloured persons on the same terms with those of whites.

Minnesota enacts that all labour performed by contract upon a building shall be a first lien thereon; and declares that the fact that the person performing the labour was not enjoined from so doing shall be conclusive evidence of the contract.

Alabama makes it a punishable offence for a banker to discount at a higher rate than 8 per cent.

Many States have stringent usury laws.

Pennsylvania forbids a mortgagee to contract for the payment by the mortgagor of any taxes over and above the interest payable.

CHAPTER XCII

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

ALTHOUGH the question of admitting women to active political rights cannot be called one of the foremost issues of to-day in the United States, its history and present position are so illustrative of the way in which political proposals spring up, and are agitated and handled in that country, that it would deserve to be here noticed, even were it not a matter which has a present interest for at least one European country. All those who have speculated on the foundations of human society and government have long been confronted by the question how far differences of sex ought to imply and prescribe a distinction of civic rights and functions between men and women. Some of the bolder among philosophers have answered the question by simply ignoring the differences. Perceiving in women an intelligence and will, which if never equal to that of the very strongest men, yet makes the average woman the equal for most purposes of the average man, inasmuch as she gains in quickness and delicacy of perception what she loses in force and endurance, they have found no reason why woman should not share the labours, duties, and privileges of man. This was Plato's view, pushed by him so far as to expunge marriage and domestic life altogether; and it has found expression in more than one religious movement in ancient as well as in modern times.

Christianity approached the problem from another side. Recognizing in woman an immortal soul equally precious with the soul of man, the New Testament and the usages of the primitive church opened to her a wide range of functions, virtues, and glories, in some of which she was fitted to surpass, and has in fact surpassed man; while the imagination of the Middle Ages, more intense and fervid than that of any other epoch in history, created an ideal of feminine sweetness, purity, and moral beauty infinitely surpassing that of the ancient world, and which the modern world may count as its noblest possession, an ideal on the preservation of which, more perhaps than of any other human conception, the welfare of the race depends.

The consecration of the spiritual equality of woman would doubtless have gone still farther than it did to secure for her a tangible equality in social and possibly even in political matters but for the rudeness of the times, in which physical force counted for much, and for the growth of a sacramental and sacerdotal system, which confined priesthood and the administration of certain life-giving sacraments to men. Thus, though the relations of the sexes were placed on a more wholesome basis than in Greek and Roman antiquity, though the standard of purity was raised and the conception of marriage dignified, the recognition of equality in the sphere of law, both private and public, was less complete than might have been expected. When sacramentalism and sacerdotalism were, in the peoples of northern Europe, shattered by the religious movement of the sixteenth century, the idea of a clerical order confined to men was nevertheless maintained, except in a few small sects; and though the law grew constantly more just and humane to women, scarcely a voice was raised to claim for them a share in the privileges of public life.

In the early days of the American Republic it seems to have occurred to no statesman that the principles of the Declaration of Independence might find application no less to women than to men; but as they were not to be applied to men of any other colour but white, this need the less be wondered at. However, the legal position of women was speedily improved. State legislation gave them fuller rights of property and a better social status than they had enjoyed under the English common law, and the respectful deference with which they were treated was remarked by travellers as a singular exception to the general imperfection of American male manners, and as in fact tending to affect inauspiciously the grace of female manners.

When negro slavery began to excite the horror of sensitive minds, it became necessary to re-examine the foundations of society and find a theory which would, in asserting the ultimate similarity and equality of all men, condemn the ownership of one man by another. This was done by recurring to the New Testament and the Declaration of Independence. Two questions speedily suggested themselves. If all men of whatever race are equal, what of women? If equality be an absolute and, so to speak, indefeasible truth and principle, what does it import? Does it cover merely the passive rights of citizenship, the right to freedom and protection for person and property? or does it extend to the active right of participating in the government of the Commonwealth? "We demand freedom for the negro. Do we also demand a share in the government? If we do, are not women at least as well entitled? If we do not, it is because we see that the negro is so ignorant and altogether backward as to be unfit to exercise political power. But can this be said of women? The considerations which might apply to the case of the liberated negro do not apply to her, for she is educated and capable. How, then, can she be excluded?"

This was an abstract way of looking at the matter, because there had not as yet been any substantial demand by women for political rights. But it was on the basis of abstract right that they were proceeding. Theory is potent with those who are themselves appealing from an actual state of things to theory and general principles. And in this instance a practical turn was given to the question by the fact that many of the most zealous and helpful workers in the Abolitionist movement were women. They showed as much courage in facing obloquy and even danger in what they deemed a sacred cause as Garrison or Lovejoy. They filled the Abolition societies and flocked to the Abolitionist conventions. They were soon admitted to vote and hold office in these organizations. The more timid or conservative members protested, and some seceded. But in an aggressive movement, as in a revolution, those who go farthest are apt to fare best. The advocates of women's claims were the bolder spirits who retained the direction of the Anti-Slavery movement. The women established their right to share the perils of the combat and the glories of the victory.

The claim of women to be admitted to the franchise and to public office would no doubt have been made sooner or later in America had there been no anti-slavery agitation, as it has been made in England. But the circumstances of its origin in that agitation have tinged its subsequent course. They invested it in the eyes of one set of persons with a species of consecration, while providing it with a body of trained workers and a precedent inspiring hope and teaching patience. To minds of an opposite cast they gave it a flavour of sentimentalism, crotchetiness, and of what used to be called in America "radicalism."[1] While the struggle against slavery continued, the question was content to stand back, but since the end of the Civil War and the admission of the negroes to the franchise, it has come to the front, and continues to be actively pressed. There are now women's suffrage societies in most parts of the North and West. An annual convention of delegates from these societies is held, which stimulates the local workers and resolves on a plan of operations.[2] Proposals for the admission of women to this or that species of suffrage are sedulously urged on State legislatures. In every Congress an amendment to the Federal Constitution recognizing women as voters is submitted. Neither House has so far accepted the amendment, and the chance of its being passed by three-fourths of the States is at present very small. Once or twice women have been nominated as candidates for the Presidency, though none has ever put out a list of presidential electors pledged to support her candidature.

These efforts have borne some fruit, though less than the party counted on twenty-five years ago. So far as I have been able to ascertain the present state of the law in the different States and Territories of the Union, the political rights of women stand as follows:—

In no State has the suffrage in elections to the State legislature and State offices been extended to women, and therefore they nowhere enjoy the right of voting in Federal elections. Amendments to State constitutions purporting to confer this suffrage have been passed by the legislature in several States; but the people have invariably rejected them, and generally by a decisive vote. In three Territories, however, the right of voting at legislative elections has been given by the legislature of the Territory, and in one of these, Wyoming,[3] it is still enjoyed.

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[1] The word "radical," frequently applied outside the sphere of pure politics, *e.g.* to theology, seems in American use to denote rather a tendency than a party.

[2] The first Women's Convention was held in 1848.

[3] Notice that in these Territories it was not a general vote of the citizens but a vote of the legislature that conferred the suffrage on women, because, as just observed, there have been States in which the legislature has passed constitutional amendments for the same purpose, but the people voting at the polls have rejected them. In Territories there is no constitution, and therefore no popular vote. According to Governor Hoyt of Wyoming, women's suffrage was carried

In Utah it was abolished by a Federal statute, because thought to be exercised by the Mormon wives at the bidding of their polygamous husbands, and thus to strengthen the polygamic party. In Washington Territory the law which conferred it in 1883 was declared invalid by the courts in 1887, because its nature had not been properly described in the title; was re-enacted immediately afterwards, and was in 1888 again declared invalid by the U.S. Territorial Court, on the ground that the Act of Congress organizing the Territorial legislature did not empower it to extend the suffrage to women. In enacting their State Constitution (1889) the people of Washington pronounced against female suffrage.

In fourteen States[1] women are allowed to vote at elections of school officers, or on some question connected with schools; and in several other States (nine at least), as well as in these fourteen, they may be chosen to fill school offices, such as that of school visitor, or superintendent, or member of a school committee. They also enjoy "school suffrage" in the Territories of Idaho and Wyoming.

In two States, Arkansas and Mississippi, women have the

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there, in 1869, by the arts of one man. His account is as follows: "One large-hearted legislator in Wyoming went and talked with other members of the legislature. They smiled. But he got one of the lawyers to help him draw up a short bill, which he introduced. It was considered and discussed. People smiled generally. There was not much expectation that anything of that sort would be done; but this was a shrewd fellow, who managed the party card in such a way as to get, as he believed, enough votes to carry the measure before it was brought to the test. Thus he said to the Democrats: 'We have a Republican governor and a Democratic Assembly. Now then, if we can carry this bill through the Assembly, and the Governor vetoes it, we shall have made a point, you know; we shall have shown our liberality and lost nothing. But keep still; don't say anything about it.' They promised. He then went to the Republicans and told them that the Democrats were going to support his measure, and that if *they* didn't want to lose capital they had better vote for it too. He didn't think there would be enough of them to carry it; but the vote would be on record, and thus defeat the game of the other party. And they likewise agreed to vote for it. So when the bill came to a vote it went right through! The members looked at each other in astonishment, for they hadn't intended to do it, *quite*. Then they laughed, and said it was a good joke, but they had 'got the Governor in a fix.' So the bill went, in the course of time, to John A. Campbell, who was then Governor—the first Governor of the Territory of Wyoming—and he promptly signed it! His heart was right!"—Address delivered at Philadelphia in 1882.

[1] Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, Wisconsin. Women enjoy school and municipal franchise in the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia. (I have been unable to ascertain the provisions of the Constitutions of the four newest States on this point.)

right of voting, though not in person, upon the question of granting licences for the sale of intoxicants. A bill to confer the same right was lost in the Massachusetts legislature of 1888 by a majority of one vote only. A similar proposal was defeated in the legislature of Iowa in March 1888.

In one State, Kansas, women have recently received the suffrage in all municipal elections in towns or villages of more than 500 inhabitants. They exercised the privilege for the first time in April 1887, and the result of the experiment is watched with much interest.[1]

In those States where women possess the school suffrage it is reported that extremely few vote; and this is ascribed partly to indifference, partly to the difficulty which women of the humbler class experience in leaving their homes to go to the poll. In Minneapolis, a city of 200,000 people, one is told that only two or three hundred women usually vote at school elections, and in Massachusetts the number of women going to the poll declined rapidly after the first few years.

In the Territory of Wyoming women serve as jurors, and in the Territory of Washington they served from 1884 to 1887, when the legislature, in re-granting the right of voting, omitted to grant the duty or privilege of jury service. Those whose opinions I have inquired inform me that the presence of women on juries was deemed a grave evil; and that in prosecutions for gambling or the sale of intoxicants a defendant had no chance before them. It is also stated that comparatively few went to the poll. As regards Wyoming Territory, where the experiment has been longest at work both as regards full suffrage and jury service, the balance of such evidence as I could collect seems to be unfavourable, though both the advocates and the opponents of women's suffrage feel so strongly on the matter that it is hard to say how much allowance must be made, in weighing testimony, for a partisan bias. One of the most trustworthy authorities writes to me as follows:—

"After the first excitement is over, it is impossible to get respectable women out to vote except every two or three years on some purely emotional question like Prohibition or other temperance legislation. The effect on family life seems to be

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[1] Similar proposals have within the last two years been defeated in Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York. In 1889 the city of Elk Falls, Kansas, elected a mayor, council, and police judge, all women.

nil; certainly not bad, but after a year or two it is found that the women of the worst classes are those that most regularly go to the polls."[1] As regards Washington Territory, a gentleman of standing resident there writes me that "few women took advantage of the ballot privilege, and most of them were greatly relieved that the responsibility was removed." However, the *Woman's Journal* of Boston declares that the women used their right freely.

No evidence has come in my way tending to show that politics are in Wyoming or were in Washington at all purer than in the adjoining States and Territories. The most that seems to be alleged is that they are no worse; or, as the Americans express it, "Things are very much what they were before, only more so." The experience of Wyoming is of slight value; it is a very small and raw community, which in 1880 had a population of only 20,000. That of Washington is entitled to more weight; and it deserves to be noticed that the legislature of that Territory, instead of using the opportunity, given by the decision of the supreme court of the Territory in 1887, of getting rid of women's suffrage without a formal repeal, re-enacted the law forthwith. But legislatures are more amenable to influence than the people, and the people in 1889 refused the suffrage to women after a four years' trial.

Wherever the suffrage or any other public right has been given, it is given equally to married and to unmarried women.[2] No one dreams of drawing any distinction between the claims of the single and the married, or of making marriage entail disfranchisement. To do so would be alien to the whole spirit of American legislation, and would indeed involve a much grosser anomaly or injustice than the exclusion of all women alike from political functions. This point, therefore, on which much controversy has arisen in England, has given no trouble in the

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[1] Governor Hoyt of Wyoming in the address above cited, delivered in 1882, and since published as a pamphlet, presents a more favourable but rather vague and unsatisfying view of the matter.

[2] In a few States, however (*e.g.* Indiana and Oregon), school suffrage is limited to women who are heads of families, because these only are deemed to be interested in respect of children; and in a few (*e.g.* Michigan, Indiana, and Oregon) there are property qualifications of small amount attached to the school suffrage in the case of women which are not required in the case of men. In Kentucky school suffrage seems to be withheld from married women.

United States: and similarly, the Americans always assume that wherever women receive the right of voting at the election to any office, they become as a matter of course eligible for the office itself. In some cases eligibility for the office has preceded the gift of the suffrage. There are States in which women have no school suffrage, but are chosen to school offices; and States (Massachusetts for instance) in which they have no vote at municipal or State elections, but where they are placed on the State Board of Education or the Board of Prison Commissioners. It would be deemed in the last degree illogical to give women municipal suffrage, and not allow a woman to be chosen Mayoress, to give State (and therewith congressional) suffrage and not allow a woman to enter both the State legislature and Congress, to give suffrage at the presidential election and yet disqualify a woman for the presidency of the United States.[1]

"What," it will be asked, "are the forces by which the Women's Rights movement is now pressed forward? What are the arguments used to support it? Are they of a theoretical or of a practical nature? Is it on the ground of abstract justice and democratic principle that the battle is being fought, or is it alleged that women suffer from positive disabilities and hardships which nothing but an equal share in political power will remove?"

Both sets of arguments are employed; but those of a theoretical order seem to hold the chief place. In all or nearly all States married women have complete rights to their property; in most, mothers have rights considerable, if not quite equal to those of fathers, in the guardianship of their children; in all, women enjoy the equal protection of the law and are admissible to professions and the training needed for professions, while the laws of divorce, whatever may be said of them in other respects, are rarely more indulgent to husbands than to wives. Although therefore the advocates of women's suffrage expect some tangible legislative benefits to woman from her admission to the franchise, especially in the way of obtaining better protection for women and children, the case on this side does not seem, so far as I have been able to ascertain, to be an urgent one, or to excite much strength of feeling. It is rather because the exclusion from political power is deemed in itself unjust and degrading, and is thought to place woman altogether on a lower level, that it is so warmly resented. It seems to be believed that a nobler and more vigorous type of womanhood would be developed by the complete recognition of her equality, a wider and grander sphere of action opened to her efforts. Perhaps the commonest argument is contained in the question, "Why not? What reason can you give, you whose forefathers revolted from England because representation was not suffered to go with taxation, you who annually repeat the Declaration of Independence as if it were the Nicene Creed, you who twenty years ago enfranchised ignorant negroes, for excluding from the suffrage women who pay taxes, who are within the reason and meaning of the Declaration of 1776, who are far more intellectually and morally competent than the coloured millions of the South?" This appeal, which becomes all the stronger as an *argumentum ad hominem* because the American man is exceptionally deferential to women, and the American statesman exceptionally disposed to comply with every request which is urgently pressed upon him, is the kernel of the suffragist case. However, it derives no small practical aid from a practical consideration. The one question of current politics which heartily interests women is the question of restricting or prohibiting the sale of intoxicants. This is also the question which excites not perhaps the widest yet certainly the keenest interest in the minds of a great host of male voters. The enemies of the liquor traffic have therefore a strong motive for desiring to see their voting power reinforced by those whose aid would secure victory; and in fact Prohibitionist Conventions almost always declare in favour of women's suffrage.

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[1] Women are not unfrequently appointed to posts connected with legislative bodies. I found in Washington Territory that they had been chosen to be clerks and messengers to one or other of the Houses of the Territorial legislature.

Yet it must not be supposed that the sentimental arguments are all on one side. There is a widespread apprehension that to bring women into politics might lower their social position, diminish men's deference for them, harden and roughen them, and, as it is expressed, "brush the bloom off the flowers." This feeling is at least as strong among women as among men. I am inclined to think, though of course this is mere conjecture, that the proportion of women who desire the suffrage is much smaller in America than in England. Of the many American ladies whose opinion I inquired, the enormous majority expressed themselves hostile; and I hear that quite recently a Ladies' Anti-Suffrage

League has been formed in Massachusetts, whereas in England no similar organization has been ever created among either men or women. It is remarkable that the movement has in America found scarcely any support among what may be called the "upper classes." Women's suffragism is thought "bad form," is supposed to betoken a want of culture and refinement. The same reproach attached forty years ago to Abolitionism. It has certainly been an injury to the cause that some few of its prominent advocates, disavowed no doubt by the great bulk of the suffrage party, have also advocated a general unsettlement of the relations between the sexes, and that a few others have been too masculine in their manners and discourse. The sentimental aversion to seeing women immersed in politics is all the greater, because "politics" have a technical meaning which is repellent to refined Americans; and the practical objection to doubling constituencies which are already enormous—a member of Congress represents about five times as many voters as an English member of Parliament—is strongly felt by philosophic publicists. Even those who desire to see the sale of intoxicants restricted feel doubts as to the expediency of attaining their object by the votes of women, because the difficulty of enforcing prohibitory legislation, already serious where the drinking minority is strong, would be much greater if a majority of men in favour of keeping bars and saloons open were overborne by a minority of men turned into a majority by the votes of women.

It is commonly assumed that in a democratic country all changes are towards a further extension of the suffrage, that democratic voters are like the unjust judge in the parable, and will yield to importunity what they might refuse to justice, in short, that whatever an active section continues to press for it will sooner or later obtain. But this assumption may be too hasty. True it is that so far the agitation for the grant of suffrage to women has been met by little in the way of counter agitation, that democratic doctrine has still power over the American mind, that the support of the Prohibitionist party is an important factor in the problem. Yet who can tell whether the movement will evoke as much enthusiasm during the next thirty years as it has done during the last thirty? When the group of Abolitionist leaders, already sadly thinned by death, pass finally off the stage, will men and women of equal ardour arise to fill their places? Will the Abolitionist spirit, which insisted on giving full political effect to the conception of equal human rights, be as intense in the next generation as in that which saw the horrors of slavery? Will what may be called, in no disparaging sense, the sentimental tendency in politics be as strong then as it is even to-day? The liquor question may possibly be settled, or at least so far settled as no longer to dominate politics, and other questions may come up, thrusting female suffrage into the background. The remarkable progress which the movement has made in England cheers its American adherents; but it has some advantages in England which it wants in America. In England the Liberal party, which is apt to be the party of theory and sentiment, has favoured it, because less afraid of change, and more disposed to admit every one to political power; while the Tory party has latterly favoured it in the belief that women are conservative in their tendencies, and would support the Established Church and established institutions generally. It has thus had the rare good fortune of drawing support from both camps, though for different reasons. But in America most of the leaders of both the great parties seem unfriendly, perhaps because the introduction of a vast mass of new voters might strain the party machinery, and bring in an incalculable and therefore disagreeable element. Both parties already dislike the Prohibitionists, because they cut across the legitimate party organizations and contests: the introduction of women would, it is thought, aggravate this mischief. Some one may say that this ought to commend the suffrage movement to the Reforming or Independent party, which attacks the so-called "Machine Men" of both Republicans and Democrats. In point of fact, however, very few of the Reformers advocate women's suffrage, apparently because they are opposed to "sentimentalism," and think that "politics" as now practised would do more harm to women than women could possibly do good to politics.

These are some of the reasons which make an impartial observer doubt whether full political suffrage, as distinguished from school or municipal suffrage, is likely to be granted to women in many States of the Union within the next thirty years, for of the remoter future it would be rash to speak. Still it must be remembered that considerable advances have been made, and that where any form of suffrage has been once granted it has never, except in the wholly exceptional case of Utah, been withdrawn. The suffragists have some grounds for the confidence of victory they express. If they can bring the public opinion of women themselves over to their side, they will succeed. To a European observer the question seems one rather of social than of political moment. If he sees little reason to expect an improvement in politics from the participation of women in elections and their admission to Congress and to high political office, neither does he find much cause for fear. Such misgivings as he entertains are of a different nature. They are serious misgivings.

CHAPTER XCIII

THE SUPPOSED FAULTS OF DEMOCRACY

THE question which in one form or another every European politician has during the last half-century been asking about the United States, is the broad question, How does democracy answer? No other country has tried the experiment of a democratic government on so large a scale, with so many minor variations, for the State governments are thirty-eight autonomous democracies, or with such advantages of geographical position and material resources. And those who think that all civilized countries are moving towards democracy, even though they may not be destined to rest there, find the question an important one for themselves. The reader who has followed thus far the account I have tried to give of the Federal Constitution and its working, of the State Constitutions, of local government, of the party machinery, of the influence of public opinion as a controlling power over all the institutions of the country, will be content with a comparatively brief summary of the results to which the inquiries made under these heads point.

That summary naturally falls into three parts. We have to ask first, how far the faults usually charged on democracy are present in America; next, what are the special faults which characterize it there; last, what are the strong points which it has developed.

The chief faults which philosophers, from Plato downwards to Mr. Robert Lowe, and popular writers repeating and caricaturing the dicta of philosophers, have attributed to democratic governments, are the following:—

Weakness in emergencies, incapacity to act with promptitude and decision.

Fickleness and instability, frequent changes of opinion, consequent changes in the conduct of affairs and in executive officials.

Insubordination, internal dissensions, disregard of authority, a frequent resort to violence, bringing on an anarchy which ends in military tyranny.

A desire to level down, and intolerance of greatness.

Tyranny of the majority over the minority.

A love of novelty: a passion for changing customs and destroying old institutions.

Ignorance and folly, producing a liability to be deceived and misled; consequent growth of demagogues playing on the passions and selfishness of the masses.

I do not say that this list exhausts the reproaches directed against democracy, but it includes those which are most often heard and are best worth examining. Most of them are drawn from the history of the Greek republics of antiquity and the Italian republics of the Middle Ages, small communities where the conditions of social and political life were so different from those of a great modern country that we ought not to expect similar results to follow from political arrangements called by the same name. However, as this consideration has not prevented writers and statesmen, even in our own day, from repeating the old censures, and indeed from mixing together in one repulsive potion all the faults that belonged to small aristocratic republics with all that can belong to large democratic republics, it is worth while to examine these current notions, and try them by the light of the facts which America furnishes.

Weakness and want of promptitude.—The American democracy is long-suffering and slow in rousing itself; it is often perplexed by problems, and seems to grope blindly for their solution. In the dealings with England and France which preceded the war of A.D. 1812, and in the conduct of that war, its government showed some irresolution and sluggishness. The habit of blustering in its intercourse with foreign powers, and the internal strife over slavery, led Europeans to think it lacked firmness and vigour. They were undeceived in 1861. While it seemed possible to avert a breach with the Southern slave-holders, the North was willing to accept, and did accept, a series of compromises whose inadequacy was soon revealed. The North was ill led in Congress, and the South was boldly if not wisely led. Yet when the crisis arrived, the North put forth its power with a suddenness and resolution which surprised the world. There was no faltering in the conduct of a struggle which for two long years

French and English statesmen deemed hopeless. The best blood of the North freely offered itself to be shed on the battlefields of Virginia and Pennsylvania for the sake of the Union; while an enormous debt was incurred in equipping army after army. As every one knows, the Southern people displayed no less vigour even when the tide had evidently began to turn against them, and the hope of European intervention died away. If want of force, dash, and courage in moments of danger is a defect generally chargeable on popular governments, it was not then chargeable on the United States. But the doctrine is one which finds little to support it either in ancient or in modern history, while there are many instances to the contrary: witness the war of the Swiss against Charles the Bold, and the defence of Florence against Charles the Fifth.

Fickleness and Instability.—The indictment fails on this count also. The people are open to sudden impulses, and in particular States there have been ill-considered innovations and a readiness to try wild experiments, such as those I have described in California. But taking the nation as a whole, its character is marked by tenacity of beliefs and adherence to leaders once chosen. The opposite charge of stubbornness in refusing to be convinced by argument and to admit the failings of men who have established some title to gratitude, might more plausibly be preferred. Western farmers suffer from the high price of the clothes they wear and the implements they use, but having an idea that a protective tariff makes somehow for the good of the country they have hitherto remained protectionists. How little did the blunders of President Grant's first administration, and the misdeeds of the knot of men who surrounded him, playing upon the political inexperience of a blunt soldier, impair the loyalty of the masses to the man whose sword had saved the Union. Congressmen and State officials are no doubt often changed, but they are changed in pursuance of a doctrine and a habit in which the interests of a class are involved, not from any fickleness in the people.[1]

Insubordination and contempt for authority.—On this head the evidence is more conflicting. There are States, and cities, in which the laws are imperfectly enforced. Homicide is hardly a crime in some parts of the South—that is to say, a man who kills another is not always arrested, often not convicted when arrested and put on his trial, very rarely hanged when convicted.[1] One might almost say that private war is recognized by opinion in these districts, as it was in Europe during the earlier Middle Ages. In the West, again, particularly in such south-western States as Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, brigandage seems to be regarded with a certain amusement, rising into sympathy, by a part of the peaceable population. Having arisen partly out of the Border ruffianism which preceded the outbreak of the Civil War, partly among men who were constantly engaged in skirmishing with the Indian tribes, there is a flavour of romance about it, which ceases to gild the exploits of train-robbers only when their activity threatens the commercial interests of a rising city. Jesse James, the notorious bandit of Missouri, and his brothers, were popular heroes in the region they infested, much like Robin Hood and Little John in the ballads of the thirteenth century in England. These phenomena are, however, explicable by other causes than democratic government. The homicidal habits of the South are a relic of that semi-barbarism which slavery kept alive long after the northern free States had reached the level of European order. Brigandage is due to the absence of a mounted gendarmerie in the vast and thinly-peopled Farther West, and there is no gendarmerie because the Federal government leaves the States and Territories to create their own, and these unsettled communities, being well armed, prefer to take care of themselves rather than spend their scanty corporate funds on a task which in such a region could not be effectively performed except at a cost disproportionate to the result.[2]

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[1] See Chap. XX. in Vol. I.

Lynch law is not unknown in more civilized regions, such as Indiana and Ohio. Now lynch law, however shocking it may seem to Europeans and New Englanders, is far removed from arbitrary violence. According to the testimony of careful observers, it is very seldom abused, and its proceedings are generally conducted with some regularity of form as well as fairness of spirit. What are the circumstances? Those highly technical rules of judicial procedure and still more technical rules of evidence which America owes to the English common law, and which have in some States retained antiquated minutiæ now expunged from English practice, or been rendered by new legislation too favourable to prisoners, have to be applied in districts where population is thin, where there are very few officers, either for the apprehension of offenders, or for the hunting up of evidence against them, and where, according to common belief, both judges and juries are occasionally "squared" or "got at." Many crimes would go unpunished if some more speedy and efficient method of dealing with them were not adopted. This method is found in a volunteer jury, summoned by the leading local citizens, or in very clear cases, by a simple seizure and execution of the criminal. Why not create an efficient police? Because crime is uncommon in many districts —in such a district, for instance, as the rural parts of Illinois,—and the people have deliberately concluded that it is cheaper and simpler to take the law into their own hands on those rare occasions when a police is needed than to be at the trouble of organizing and paying a force for which there is usually no employment. If it be urged that they are thus forming habits of lawlessness in themselves, the Americans reply that experience does not seem to make this probable, because lawlessness does not increase among the farming population, and has disappeared from places where the rudeness or simplicity of society formerly rendered lynch law necessary. However, the so-called "Molly Maguire" conspiracy, which vexed and terrified Pennsylvania for several years, showed the want of a vigorous and highly-trained police. A sort of secret society organized a succession of murders, much like the Italian Camorra, which remained undetected till a daring man succeeded in persuading the conspirators to admit him among them. He shared their schemes, and learnt to know their persons and deeds, then turned upon them and brought them to justice. This remarkable case illustrates not any neglect of law or tenderness for crime, but mainly the power of a combination which can keep its secrets. Once detected, the Molly Maguires were severely dealt with. The Pittsburg riots of 1877, and the Cincinnati riots of 1884, alarmed the Americans themselves, so long accustomed to domestic tranquillity as to have forgotten those volcanic forces which lie smouldering in all ignorant masses, ready to burst forth upon sufficient excitement. The miners and ironworkers of the Pittsburg district are rough fellows, many of them recent immigrants who have not yet acquired American habits of order; nor would there have been anything to distinguish this Pennsylvanian disturbance from those which happen during strikes in England, as, for instance, at Blackburn a few years ago, or in times of distress in France, as at Decazeville in 1886, had it been promptly suppressed. Unfortunately there was no proper force on the spot. The governor was absent; the mayor and other local authorities lost their heads; the police, feebly handled, were overpowered; the militia showed weakness; so that the riot spread in a way which surprised its authors, and the mob raged for several days along the railroads in several States, and over a large area of manufacturing and mining towns.

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[1] Murder does not seem to be dealt with quite firmly enough even in some of the Northern States. "There is no subject within the domain of legislation in which improvement is so needed as in the law against murder. The practical immunity that crime enjoys in some sections of the country, and the delay, difficulty, and uncertainty in enforcing the law almost everywhere, is a reproach to our civilization. Efforts to save assassins from punishment are so strenuous, the chances of escape so numerous, and the proceedings so protracted, that the law has few terrors for those disposed to violate it."—Address before the American Bar Association, delivered in 1881 by Mr. E. J. Phelps, President of the Association.

[2] There is always a sheriff, whose business it is to pursue criminals, and hang them if convicted, but much depends on his individual vigour.

The moral of this event was the necessity, even in a land of freedom, of keeping a force strong enough to repress tumults in their first stage. The Cincinnati riot began in an attempt to lynch two prisoners who were thought likely to escape the punishment they richly deserved; and it would probably have ended there had not the floating rabble of this city of 300,000 inhabitants seized the opportunity to do a little pillage and make a great noise on their own account. Neither sedition had any political character, nor indeed any specific object, except that the Pennsylvanian mob showed special enmity to the railroad company. They were not specially products of democracy, but they are unhappily proofs that democracy does not secure the good behaviour of its worst and newest citizens, and that it must be prepared, no less than other governments, to maintain order by the prompt and stern application of physical force.[1]

One hears in some States of laws which are systematically evaded, sometimes by the connivance of officials who are improperly induced to abstain from prosecuting transgressors, sometimes with the general consent of the community which perceives that they cannot be enforced. Thus some years ago the laws against the sale of liquor on Sundays in the city of Chicago were not enforced. The bulk of the population, being German and Irish, disliked them, and showed its dislike by turning out of the municipal offices those who had enforced them, while yet the law remained on the statute-book because, according to the Constitution of Illinois (one of the most experimental of the newer constitutions, as appears from its adoption of minority voting), it takes a majority of two-thirds in the legislature to repeal an Act; and the rural members, being largely Prohibitionists, stand by this law against Sunday dealing. When in Texas I heard of the same thing as happening in the city of San Antonio, and doubt not that it occurs in many cities. Probably more laws are quietly suffered to be broken in America than in either England or Germany. On the other hand, it is fair to say that the credit which the Americans claim of being pre-eminently a law-abiding people is borne out by the perfect public order and the general security of property and person which strikes a traveller all over the East, the middle States, and the more thickly peopled parts of the West.[1] Political disturbances are practically unknown outside some few of the southern States, where there are occasional collisions between whites and blacks, nor are they frequent or virulent in those States. Even when an election is believed to have been fraudulently won, the result is respected, because it is externally regular. Fights seldom occur at elections; neither party disturbs the meetings or processions of the other in the hottest presidential campaign. Such a series of disturbances as London and Lancashire saw in the beginning of 1882, when the meetings of a number of members of Parliament with their constituents were broken up by Irishmen, or party opponents masquerading as Irishmen, or such another series as marked the close of the agitation on the Franchise Bill in 1884, excites the wonder of Americans, who ask whether Englishmen can be fit for free government when they have not yet learnt to let their opponents meet and talk in peace.

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[1] There is a great difference between different States and cities as regards police arrangements. The police of New York City are said to be very efficient and somewhat too promptly severe in the use of their staves. But when not long ago the strikers at some of the railway yards in Jersey City, on the other side of the Hudson River from New York, molested the men who had taken work under the companies, the latter were obliged to hire policemen from a private firm to protect their employés. In some cities the police are armed with revolvers.

The habit of obedience to constituted authority is another test, and one which Plato would have considered specially conclusive. The difficulty of applying it in America is that there are so few officials who come into the relation of command with the people, or in other words, that the people are so little "governed," in the French or German sense, that one has few opportunities of discovering how they comport themselves. The officers of both the Federal and the State governments, in levying taxes and carrying out the judgments of the Courts, have seldom any resistance to fear.[1] Other authorities experience no difficulty in making themselves respected. A railroad company, for instance, finds its passengers only too submissive. They endure with a patience which astonishes Englishmen frequent irregularities of the train service and other discomforts, which would in England produce a whole crop of letters to the newspapers. The discipline of the army and navy in the war was nearly as strict as in European armies. So in universities and colleges discipline is maintained with the same general ease and the same occasional troubles as arise in Oxford and Cambridge. The children in city schools are proverbially docile. Employers never complain of any trouble in keeping order among their workpeople. So far, indeed, is insubordination from being a characteristic of the native Americans, that they are conspicuously the one free people of the world which, owing to its superior intelligence, has recognized the permanent value of order, and observes it on every occasion, not least when a sudden alarm arises. Anarchy is of all dangers or bugbears the one which the modern world has least cause to fear, for the tendency of ordinary human nature to obey is the same as in past times, and the aggregation of human beings into great masses weakens the force of the individual will, and makes men more than ever like sheep, so far as action is concerned. Much less, therefore, is there ground for fancying that out of anarchy there will grow any tyranny of force. Whether democracies may not end in yielding greater power to their executives is quite another question, whereof more anon; all I observe here is that in no country can a military despotism, such as that which has twice prevailed in France and once in England, be deemed less likely to arise. During the Civil War there were many persons in Europe cultivating, as Gibbon says, the name without the temper of philosophy, who predicted that some successful leader of the Northern armies would establish his throne on the ruins of the Constitution. But no sooner had General Lee surrendered at Appomatox than the disbandment of the victorious host began; and the only thing which thereafter distinguished Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan from their fellow-citizens was the liability to have "receptions" forced on them when they visited a city, and find their puissant arms wearied by the handshakings of their enthusiastic admirers.

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[1] There is little use in comparing the aggregate of crimes reported with the aggregates of European countries, because in disorderly regions not all crimes are reported.

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[1] Excisemen are sometimes resisted in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, which form a sort of *enclave* of semi-barbarism in a civilized country, such as the rugged Albania was in the Roman Empire.

Cæsarism is the last danger likely to menace America. In no nation is civil order more stable. None is more averse to the military spirit. No political system would offer a greater resistance to an attempt to create a standing army or centralize the administration.

Jealousy of greatness, and a desire to level down.—This charge derives a claim to respectful consideration from the authority of De Tocqueville, who thought it a necessary attribute of democracy, and professed to have discovered symptoms of it in the United States. It alarmed J. S. Mill, and has been frequently dwelt on by his disciples, and by many who have adopted no other part of his teachings, as an evil equally inevitable and fatal in democratic countries. There was probably good ground for it sixty years ago. Even now one discovers a tendency in the United States, particularly in the West, to dislike, possibly to resent, any outward manifestation of social superiority. A man would be ill looked upon who should build a castle in a park, surround his pleasure-grounds with a high wall, and receive an exclusive society in gilded saloons. One of the parts which prominent politicians, who must be assumed to know their business, most like to play is the part of Cincinnatus at the plough, or Curius Dentatus receiving the Samnite envoys over his dinner of turnips. They welcome a newspaper interviewer at their modest farm, and take pains that he should describe how simply the rooms are furnished, and how little "help" (*i.e.* how few servants) is kept. Although the cynics of the New York press make a mock of such artless ways, the desired impression is produced on the farmer and the artisan. At a senatorial election not long ago in a north-western State, the opponents of the sitting candidate procured a photograph of his residence in Washington, a handsome mansion in a fashionable avenue, and circulated it among the members of the State legislature, to show in what luxury their Federal representative indulged. I remember to have heard it said of a statesman proposing to become a candidate for the Presidency, that he did not venture during the preceding year to occupy his house in Washington, lest he should give occasion for similar criticism. Whether or not this was his real motive, the attribution of it to him is equally illustrative. But how little the wealthy fear to display their wealth and take in public the pleasures it procures may be understood by any one who, walking down Fifth Avenue in New York, observes the superb houses which line it, houses whose internal decorations and collected objects of art rival those of the palaces of European nobles, or who watches in Newport, the most fashionable of transatlantic watering-places, the lavish expenditure upon servants, horses, carriages, and luxuries of every kind. No spot in Europe conveys an equal impression of the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, of boundless wealth and a boundless desire for enjoyment, as does the Ocean Drive at Newport on an afternoon in August.

Intellectual eminence excites no jealousy, though it is more admired and respected than in Europe. The men who make great fortunes, such as the late Mr. A. T. Stewart, or "Commodore" Vanderbilt, are not regarded with suspicion or envy, but rather with admiration. "When thou doest good unto thyself, all men shall speak well of thee." Wealth does not, as in England, give its possessors an immediate *entrée* to fashionable society, but it marks them as the heroes and leaders of the commercial world, and sets them on a pinnacle of fame which fires the imagination of ambitious youths in dry goods stores or traffic clerks on a railroad. The demonstrations of hostility to wealthy "monopolists," and especially to railroad companies, made in some districts, are prompted, not by hatred to prominence or wealth, but by discontent at the immense power which capitalists exercise, especially in the business of transporting goods, and which they have frequently abused.

Tyranny of the majority.—Of this I have spoken in a previous chapter, and need only summarize the conclusions there arrived at. So far as compulsive legislation goes, it has never been, and is now less than ever, a serious or widespread evil. The press is free to advocate unpopular doctrines, even the most brutal forms of anarchism. Religious belief and practices are untouched by law. The sale of intoxicants is no doubt in many places restricted or forbidden, but to assume that this is a tyrannical proceeding is to beg a question on which the wise are much divided. The taxation of the rich for the benefit of the poor offers the greatest temptation to a majority disposed to abuse its powers. But neither Congress nor the State legislatures have, with a very few exceptions, gone any farther in this direction than the great nations of Europe. I may be told that this abstention from legislative tyranny is due, not to the wisdom and fairness of the American democracy, but to the restraints which the Federal and State constitutions impose upon it. This is true. But who impose and maintain these restrictions? The people themselves, who surely deserve the credit of desiring to remove from their own path temptations which might occasionally prove irresistible. I am not, however, arguing in favour of democracy in general, but simply pointing out how a self-governing multitude has behaved under certain given conditions, conditions in some points exceptionally favourable. The absence of class hatreds has been such a condition. Another may be found in the fact that the two great national parties do not correspond with any class divisions. Taking the whole country, rich and poor are equally represented in both of these parties. Neither proposes to overtax the rich. Both denounce monopolism in the abstract, and promise to restrain capital from abusing its power, but neither is more forward than the other to take practical steps for such a purpose, because each includes capitalists whose contributions the party needs, and each equally leans upon the respectable and wealthy classes,—the Republicans more particularly on those classes in the North, the Democrats on the same classes in the South. Party lines do not coincide with social lines or religious lines, as they have often done in Europe.

In the several States in which the masses, because the sphere of legislation is wider, might more easily attack the rich or any unpopular class, the lines on which parties act are fixed by the lines which separate the national parties, and each party is therefore held back from professing doctrines which menace the interests of any class. The only exceptions occur where some burning economic question supersedes for the moment the regular party attachments. This happened in California, with the consequences already described. It came near happening in two or three of the north-western States, such as Illinois and Wisconsin, where the farmers, organized in their Granges or agricultural clubs, caused the legislatures to pass statutes which bore hardly on the railroads and the owners of elevators and grain warehouses. Yet even this legislation could scarcely be called tyrannical. It was an attempt, however clumsy and abrupt, to deal with a real economical mischief, not an undue extension of the scope of legislation to matters in which majorities ought not to control minorities at all. On a review of the whole matter it may safely be said that the majority abuses its legal power no more in the United States than in Europe. Its extra-legal power, its social and moral authority, was doubtless abused some fifty years ago. This has ceased, at least in the more advanced parts of the country, and the fact that a malady which once vexed the system has been thrown off by the natural forces of growth may be deemed an auspicious omen for future health.

Love of novelty; passion for destroying old institutions.—It is easy to see how democracies have been credited with this tendency. They have risen out of oligarchies or aristocratic monarchies, the process of their rise coinciding, if not always with a revolution, at least with a breaking down of many old usages and institutions. It is this very breaking down that gives birth to them. Probably some of the former institutions are spared, are presently found incompatible with the new order of things, and then have to be changed till the people has, so to speak, furnished its house according to its taste. But when the new order has been established, is there any ground for believing that a democracy is an exception to the general tendency of mankind to adhere to the customs they have formed, admire the institutions they have created, and even bear the ills they know rather than incur the trouble of finding some way out of them? The Americans are not an exception. They value themselves only too self-complacently on their methods of government; they abide by their customs, because they admire them. They love novelty in the sphere of amusement, literature, and social life; but in serious matters, such as the fundamental institutions of government and in religious belief, no progressive and civilized people is more conservative.

Liability to be misled: influence of demagogues.—No doubt the inexperience of the recent immigrants, the want of trained political thought among the bulk even of native citizens, the tendency to sentimentalism which marks all large masses of men, do lay the people open to the fallacious reasoning and specious persuasions of adventurers. This happens in all popularly-governed countries; and a phenomenon substantially the same occurs in oligarchies, for you may have not only aristocratic demagogues, but demagogues playing to an aristocratic mob. Stripped of its externals and considered in its essential features, demagogism is no more abundant in America than in England, France, or Italy. In fact, the danger to be feared from it seems graver in these countries than in the United States, not merely because the Federal Constitution provides safeguards which those countries do not possess, but also because the American people are shrewd. A spouter like Denis Kearney is allowed to talk himself hoarse, and relapses into obscurity. A demagogue of greater talent may aspire to some high executive office;[1] if not to the Presidency, then perhaps a place in the Cabinet, where he may practically pull the wires of a President whom he has put into the chair. Failing either of these, he aims at the governorship of his State or the mayoralty of a great city. In no one of these positions can he do permanent harm. The Federal executive has no influence on legislation, and even in foreign policy and in the making of appointments requires the consent of the Senate. That any man should acquire so great a hold on the country as to secure the election of two Houses of Congress subservient to his will, while at the same time securing the Presidency or Secretaryship of State for himself, is an event too improbable to enter into calculation. Nothing approaching it has been seen since the days of Jackson. The size of the country, the differences between the States, a hundred other causes, make achievements possible enough in a European country all but impossible here. That a plausible adventurer should clamber to the presidential chair, and when seated there should conspire with a corrupt congressional ring, purchasing by the gift of offices and by jobs their support for his own schemes of private cupidity or public mischief, is conceivable, but improbable. The system of counter-checks in the Federal government, which impedes or delays much good legislation, may be relied on to avert many of the dangers to which the sovereign chambers of European countries are exposed.

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[1] When demagogism appears, State politics is usually the sphere of its action.

A demagogue installed as governor of a State has but limited opportunities for wrong-doing. He can make a few bad appointments, and can discredit the commonwealth by undignified acts. He cannot seriously harm it. Two politicians who seem to deserve the title recently obtained that honourable post in two great Eastern States. One of them, a typical "ringster," perpetrated some jobs and vetoed a few good bills. The other, a man of greater natural gifts and greater capacity for mischief, whose capture of the chief magistracy of the State had drawn forth lamentations from the better citizens, seems to have left things much as he found them, and the most noteworthy incident which marked his year of office—for he was turned out at the next election—was the snub administered by the leading university in the State, which refused him the compliment usually paid to a chief magistrate of an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

This inquiry has shown us that of the faults traditionally attributed to democracy one only is fairly chargeable on the United States; that is to say, is manifested there more conspicuously than in the constitutional monarchies of Europe. This is the disposition to be lax in enforcing laws disliked by any large part of the population, and to be too indulgent to offenders and law-breakers generally. The Americans themselves admit this to be one of their weak points. How far it is due to that deficient reverence for law which is supposed to arise in popular governments from the fact that the people have nothing higher than themselves to look up to, how far rather to the national easy-goingness and good-nature, I do not attempt to determine. It has produced no general disposition to lawlessness, but on the contrary diminishes in the older parts of the country. And it is counter-balanced or replaced in a serious crisis, by a firmness in repressing disorders which some European governments may envy. When men are throughly awakened to the need for enforcing the law, they enforce it all the more resolutely because it has the whole weight of the people behind it.

CHAPTER XCIV

THE TRUE FAULTS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

We have seen that the defects commonly attributed to democratic government are not specially characteristic of the United States. It remains to inquire what are the peculiar blemishes which the country does show. So far as regards the constitutional machinery of the Federal and of the State government this question has been answered in earlier chapters. It is now rather the tendency of the institutions generally, the disposition and habits of the governing people, that we have to consider. The word Democracy is often used to mean a spirit or tendency, sometimes the spirit of revolution, sometimes the spirit of equality. For our present purpose it is better to take it as denoting simply a form of government, that in which the numerical majority rules, deciding questions of state by the votes, whether directly, as in the ancient republics, or mediately, as in modern representative government, of the body of citizens, the citizens being if not the whole, at least a very large proportion of the adult males. We may properly begin by asking, What are the evils to which we may expect such a form of government to be exposed? and may then go on to see whether any others are discoverable in the United States which, though traceable to democracy, are not of its essence, but due to the particular form which it has there taken.

It is an old maxim that republics live by Virtue—that is, by the maintenance of a high level of public spirit and justice among the citizens. If the republic be one in which power is confined to, or practically exercised by, a small educated class, the maintenance of this high level is helped by the sense of personal dignity which their position engenders. If the republic itself be small, and bear rule over others, patriotism may be intense, and the sense of the collective dignity of the state may ennoble the minds of the citizens, make them willing to accept sacrifices for its sake, to forego private interests and suppress private resentments, in order to be strong against the outer world. But if the state be very large, and the rights of all citizens equal, we must not expect them to rise above the average level of human nature. Rousseau and Jefferson will tell us that this level is high, that the faults which governments have hitherto shown are due to the selfishness of privileged persons and classes, that the ordinary unsophisticated man will love justice, desire the good of others, need no constraint to keep him in the right path. Experience will contradict them, and whether it talks of Original Sin or adopts some less scholastic phrase, will recognize that the tendencies to evil in human nature are not perhaps as strong, but as various and abiding even in the most civilized societies, as its impulses to good. Hence the rule of numbers means the rule of ordinary mankind without those artificial helps which their privileged position has given to limited governing classes, though also, no doubt, without those special temptations which follow in the wake of power and privilege.

Every question that arises in the conduct of government is either a question of ends or a question of means; and errors may be committed by the ruling power either in fixing on wrong ends or in choosing wrong means to secure those ends. It is now, after long resistance by those who maintained that they knew better what was good for the people than the people knew themselves, at last agreed that as the masses are better judges of what will conduce to their own happiness than are the classes placed above them, they must be allowed to determine ends. This is in fact the essence of free or popular government, and the justification for vesting power in numbers. But assuming the end to be given, who is best qualified to select the means for its accomplishment? To do so needs in many cases a knowledge of the facts, a skill in interpreting them, a power of forecasting the results of measures, unattainable by the mass of mankind. Such knowledge is too high for them. It is attainable only by trained economists, legists, statesmen. If the masses attempt it they will commit mistakes not less serious than those which befall a litigant who insists on conducting a complicated case instead of leaving it to his attorney and counsel. But in popular governments this distinction between ends and means is apt to be forgotten. Often it is one which cannot be sharply drawn, because some ends are means to larger ends, and some means are desired not only for the sake of larger ends, but for their own sakes also. And the habit of trusting its own wisdom and enjoying its own power, in which the multitude is encouraged by its leaders and servants, disposes it to ignore the distinction even where the distinction is clear, and makes it refer to the direct arbitrament of the people matters which the people are unfit to decide, and which they might safely leave to their trained ministers or representatives. Thus we find that the direct government of the multitude may become dangerous not only because the multitude shares the faults and follies of ordinary human nature, but also because it is intellectually incompetent for the delicate business of conducting the daily work of government, *i.e.* of choosing and carrying out with vigour and promptitude the requisite executive means. The fact that it is called by a singular name has made many forget that the people means nothing more than so many millions of individual men. There is a sense in which it is true that the people are wiser than the wisest man. But what is true of their ultimate judgment after the lapse of time sufficient for full discussion, is not equally true of decisions that have to be promptly taken.

What are the consequences which we may expect to follow from these characteristics of democracy and these conditions under which it is forced to work?

First, a certain commonness of mind and tone, a want of dignity and elevation in and about the conduct of public affairs. an insensibility to the nobler aspects and finer responsibilities of national life.

Secondly, a certain apathy among the luxurious classes and fastidious minds, who find themselves of no more account than the ordinary voter, and are disgusted by the superficial vulgarities of public life.

Thirdly, a want of knowledge, tact, and judgment in the details of legislation, as well as in administration, with an inadequate recognition of the difficulty of these kinds of work, and of the worth of special experience and skill in dealing with them. Because it is incompetent, the multitude will not feel its incompetence, and will not seek or defer to the counsels of those who possess the requisite capacity.

Fourthly, laxity in the management of public business. The persons entrusted with such business being only average men, thinking themselves and thought of by others as average men, with a deficient sense of their high responsibilities, may succumb to the temptations which the control of legislation and the public funds present, in cases where persons of a more enlarged view and with more of a social reputation to support would remain incorruptible. To repress such derelictions of duty is every citizen's duty, but for that reason it is in large communities apt to be neglected. Thus the very causes which implant the mischief favour its growth.

The above-mentioned tendencies are all more or less observable in the United States. As each of them has been described already in its proper place, a summary reference may here be sufficient to indicate their relation to the democratic form of government and to the immanent spirit or theory which lies behind that form.

The tone of public life is lower than one expects to find it in so great a nation. Just as we assume that an individual man will at any supreme moment in his own life rise to a higher level than that on which he usually moves, so we look to find those who conduct the affairs of a great state inspired by a sense of the magnitude of the interests entrusted to them. Their horizon ought to be expanded, their feeling of duty quickened, their dignity of attitude enhanced. Human nature with all its weaknesses does show itself capable of being thus roused on its imaginative side; and in Europe, where the traditions of aristocracy survive, everybody condemns as mean or unworthy acts done or language held by a great official which would pass unnoticed in a private citizen. It is the principle of *noblesse oblige* with the sense of duty and trust substituted for that of mere hereditary rank.

Such a sentiment is comparatively weak in America. A cabinet minister, or senator, or governor of a State, sometimes even a President, hardly feels himself more bound by it than the director of a railway company or the mayor of a town does in Europe. Not assuming himself to be individually wiser, stronger, or better than his fellow-citizens, he acts and speaks as though he were still simply one of them, and so far from magnifying his office and making it honourable, seems anxious to show that he is the mere creature of the popular vote, so filled by the sense that it is the people and not he who governs as to fear that he should be deemed to have forgotten his personal insignificance. There is in the United States abundance of patriotism, that is to say, of a passion for the greatness and happiness of the Republic, and a readiness to make sacrifices for it. The history of the Civil War showed that this passion is at least as strong as in England or France. There is no want of an appreciation of the collective majesty of the nation, for this is the theme of incessant speeches, nor even of the past and future glories of each particular State in the Union. But these sentiments do not bear their appropriate fruit in raising the conception of public office, of its worth and its dignity. The newspapers assume public men to be selfish and cynical. Disinterested virtue is not looked for, is perhaps turned into ridicule where it exists. The hard commercial spirit which pervades the meetings of a joint-stock company is the spirit in which most politicians speak of public business, and are not blamed for speaking. Something, especially in the case of newspapers, must be allowed for the humorous tendencies of the American mind, which likes to put forward the absurd and even vulgar side of things for the sake of getting fun out of them. But after making such allowances, the fact remains that, although no people is more emotional, and even in a sense more poetical, in no country is the ideal side of public life, what one may venture to call the heroic element in a public career, so ignored by the mass and repudiated by the leaders. This affects not only the elevation but the independence and courage of public men; and the country suffers from the want of what we call distinction in its conspicuous figures.

I have discussed in a previous chapter the difficulties which surround the rule of public opinion where it allows little discretion to its agents, relying upon its own competence to supervise administration and secure the legislation which a progressive country needs. The American masses have been obliged, both by democratic theory and by the structure of their government, to proceed upon the assumption of their own competence. They have succeeded better than could have been expected. No people except the choicest children of England, long trained by the practice of local self-government at home and in the colonies before their revolt, could have succeeded half so well. Still the masses of the United States as one finds them to-day are no exception to the rule that some problems are beyond the competence of the average man. They can deal with broad and simple issues, especially with issues into which a moral element enters. They spoke out with a clear strong voice upon slavery, when at last it had become plain that slavery must either spread or vanish, and threw themselves with enthusiasm into the struggle for the Union. Their instinctive dislike for foreign annexation foiled President Grant's plan for acquiring San Domingo. Their sense of national and commercial honour has defeated more than one mischievous scheme for tampering with the public debt. But when a question of intricacy presents itself, requiring either keen foresight, exact reasoning, or wide knowledge, they are at fault. Questions relating to currency and coinage, free trade and protection, improvements in the machinery of constitutions or of municipal governments, the control of corporations by the law, the method of securing purity of elections, these are problems which have continued to baffle them, just as the Free Soil question did before the war or the reconstruction of the revolted Southern States for a long time after it.[1] In those two instances a solution came about, but in the former it was not so much effected by the policy of the people or their statesmen as forced on them by events, in the latter it has left serious evils behind.

Is this a defect incidental to all popular governments, or is there anything in the American system specially calculated to produce it?

A state must of course take the people as it finds them, with such elements of ignorance and passion as exist in masses of men everywhere. Nevertheless a representative or parliamentary system provides the means of mitigating the evils to be feared from ignorance or haste, for it vests the actual conduct of affairs in a body of specially chosen and presumably specially qualified men, who may themselves entrust such of their functions as need peculiar knowledge or skill to a smaller governing body or bodies selected in respect of their more eminent fitness. By this method the defects of democracy are remedied, while its strength is retained. The masses give their impulse to the representatives: the representatives, directed by the people to secure certain ends, bring their skill and experience to bear on the choice and application of the best means. The Americans, however, have not so constructed or composed their representative bodies as to secure a large measure of these benefits. The legislatures are disjoined from the administrative offices. The members of legislatures are not chosen for their ability or experience, but are, five-sixths of them, little above the average citizen. They are not much respected or trusted, and finding nothing exceptional expected from them, they behave as ordinary men. The separation of the executive from the legislature is a part of the constitutional arrangements of the country, and has no doubt some advantages. The character of the legislatures is due to a mistaken view of human equality and an exaggerated devotion to popular sovereignty. It is a result of democratic theory pushed to extremes, but is not necessarily incident to a democratic government. The government of England, for instance, has now become substantially a democracy, but there is no reason why it should imitate America in either of the points just mentioned, nor does democratic France, apt enough to make a bold use of theory, seem to have pushed theory to excess in these particular directions. I do not, however, deny that a democratic system makes the people self-confident, and that self-confidence may easily pass into a jealousy of delegated power, an undervaluing of skill and knowledge, a belief that any citizen is good enough for any political work. This is perhaps more likely to happen with a people who have really reached a high level of political competence: and so one may say that the reason why the American democracy is not better is because it is so good. Were it less educated, less shrewd, less actively interested in public affairs, less independent in spirit, it might be more disposed, like the masses in Europe, to look up to the classes which have hitherto done the work of governing. So perhaps the excellence of rural local self-government has lowered the conception of national government. The ordinary American farmer or shopkeeper or artisan bears a part in the local government of his township or village, or county, or small municipality. He is quite competent to discuss the questions that arise there. He knows his fellow-citizens, and can, if he takes the trouble, select the fittest of them for local office. No high standard of fitness is needed, for the work of local administration can be adequately despatched by any sensible man of business habits. Taking his ideas from this local government, he images Congress to himself as nothing more than a larger town council or board of county commissioners, the President and his Cabinet as a sort of bigger mayor and city treasurer and education superintendent; he is therefore content to choose for high Federal posts such persons as he would elect for these local offices. They are such as he is himself; and it would seem to him a disparagement of his own civic worth were he to deem his neighbours, honest, hard-working, keen-witted men, unfit for any places in the service of the Republic.

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[1] I do not deny that an American critic of the English Government might point to one problem by which the British Parliament has been baffled for two or three generations, and I will even admit that the American people might probably have settled it sooner than the English Parliament is thought likely to do. Had England been either a monarchy like that of Germany, or a democracy like that of the United States, she would probably have been more successful in this particular matter.

The comparative indifference to political life of the educated and wealthy classes which is so much preached at by American reformers and dwelt on by European critics is partly due to this attitude of the multitude. These classes find no smooth and easy path lying before them. Since the masses do not look to them for guidance, they do not come forward to give it. If they wish for office they must struggle for it, avoiding the least appearance of presuming on their social position. I think, however, that the abstention of the upper class is largely ascribable to causes, set forth in a previous chapter, that have little to do with democracy; and while believing that the United States have suffered from this abstention—it seems to be now passing away—do not regard it as an inseparable incident of their government. Accidental causes, such as the Spoils System, which is a comparatively recent and evidently curable distemper, have largely contributed to it.

The Spoils System reminds us of the Machine and the whole organization of Rings and Bosses. This is the ugliest feature in the current politics of the country. Must it be set down to democracy? To some extent, yes. It could not have grown up save in a popular government; and some of the arrangements which have aided its growth, such as the number and frequency of elections, have been dictated by what may be called the narrow doctrinairism of democracy. But these arrangements are not essential to the safety of the government; and the other causes which have brought about the machine politics of cities seem to be preventible causes. The city masses may improve if immigration declines, offices may cease to be the reward of party victory, the better citizens may throw themselves more actively into political work.

That corruption should exist under a democracy is no doubt a reproach to a government which holds up, and needs for its safe working, a higher standard of virtue than any other. Remembering, however, that it was rife in the English Parliament a century and a half ago, in English constituencies thirty years ago, and that it prevails under the despotism of Russia to-day, while not uncommon in some other European monarchies, we shall be in no danger of connecting it with the form of the American government. There are diseases which attack the body politic, like the natural body, at certain stages of growth, but disappear when a nation has passed into another stage, or when sedulous experimentation has discovered the appropriate remedy. The corruption of Parliament in Sir Robert Walpole's days characterized a period of transition when power had passed to the House of Commons, but the control of the people over the House had not yet been fully established, and when, through a variety of moral causes, the tone of the nation was comparatively low. The corruption of the electorate in English boroughs appeared when a seat had become an object of desire to rich men, while yet the interest of the voters in public affairs was so feeble that they were willing to sell their votes, and their number often so small that each vote fetched a high price. The growth of intelligence and independence among the people, as well as the introduction of severe penalties for bribery, and the extinction of small constituencies, have now almost extinguished electoral corruption. So in America it may be expected that the more active conscience of the people and the reform of the civil service will cut down, if they do not wholly eradicate, such corruption as now infests the legislative bodies, while better ballot and election laws may do the same for the constituencies.

A European critic may remark that this way of presenting the case ignores the evils and losses which defective government involves. "If," he will say, "the mass of mankind possess neither the knowledge nor the leisure nor the skill to determine the legislation and policy of a great state, will not the vigour of the commonwealth decline and its resources be squandered? Will not a nation ruled by its average men in reliance on their own average wisdom be overtaken in the race of prosperity or overpowered in a warlike struggle by a nation of equal resources which is guided by its most capable minds?" The answer to this criticism is that America has hitherto been able to afford to squander her resources, and that no other state threatens her. With her wealth and in her position she can with impunity commit errors which might be fatal to the nations of Western Europe.

Of the deficiencies summarized in this chapter, those which might seem to go deepest, because they have least to do with the particular constitutional arrangements of the country, and are most directly the offspring of its temper and habits, are the prominence of inferior men in politics and the absence of distinguished figures. The people are good, but not good enough to be able to dispense with efficient service by capable representatives and officials, wise guidance by strong and enlightened leaders. But they are neither well served nor well led. If it were clear that these are the fruits of liberty and equality, the prospects of the world would be darker than we have been wont to think them. They are the fruits not of liberty and equality, but of an optimism which has underrated the inherent difficulties of politics and failings of human nature, of a theory which has confused equality of civil rights and duties with equality of capacity, and of a thoughtlessness which has forgotten that the problems of the world and the dangers which beset society are always putting on new faces and appearing in new directions. The Americans started their Republic with a determination to prevent abuses of power such as they had suffered from the British Crown. Freedom seemed the one thing necessary; and freedom was thought to consist in cutting down the powers of legislatures and officials. Freedom was the national boast during the years that followed down till the Civil War, and in the delight of proclaiming themselves superior in this regard to the rest of the world they omitted to provide themselves with the other requisites for good government, and forgot that power may be abused in other ways than by monarchic tyranny or legislative usurpation. They continued to beat the drum along the old ramparts erected in 1776 and 1789 against George III., or those who might try to imitate him, when the enemy had moved quite away from that side of the position, and was beginning to threaten their rear. No maxim was more popular among them than that which declares eternal vigilance to be the price of freedom. Unfortunately their vigilance took account only of the old dangers, and did not note the development of new ones, as if the captain of a man-of-war were to think only of his guns and armour-plating, and neglect to protect himself against torpedoes. Thus abuses were suffered to grow up, which seemed trivial in the midst of so general a prosperity; and good citizens who were occupied in other and more engrossing ways, allowed politics to fall into the hands of mean men. The efforts which these citizens are now making to recover the control of public business would have encountered fewer obstacles had they been made sooner. But the obstacles will be overcome. No one, I think, who has studied either the history of the American people, or their present mind and habits, will conclude that there is among them any jealousy of merit, any positive aversion to culture or knowledge. Neither the political arrangements nor the social and economical conditions of the country tend at this moment to draw its best intellects and loftiest characters into public life. But the democratic temper of the people does not stand in the way.

The commonest of the old charges against democracy was that it passed into ochlocracy. I have sought to show that this has not happened, and is not likely to happen in America. The features of mob-rule do not appear in her system, whose most characteristic faults are the existence of a class of persons using government as a means of private gain and the menacing power of wealth. Plutocracy, which the ancients contrasted with democracy, has shown in America an inauspicious affinity for certain professedly democratic institutions.

Perhaps no form of government needs great leaders so much as democracy. The fatalistic habit of mind perceptible among the Americans needs to be corrected by the spectacle of courage and independence taking their own path, and not looking to see whither the mass are moving. Those whose material prosperity tends to lap them in self-complacency and dull the edge of aspiration, need to be thrilled by the emotions which great men can excite, stimulated by the ideals they present, stirred to a loftier sense of what national life may attain. In some countries men of brilliant gifts may be dangerous to freedom; but the ambition of American statesmen has been schooled to flow in constitutional channels, and the Republic is strong enough to stand any strain to which the rise of heroes may expose her.

CHAPTER XCV

THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

THOSE merits of American government which belong to its Federal Constitution have been already discussed:[1] we have now to consider such as flow from the rule of public opinion, from the temper, habits, and ideas of the people.

I. The first is that of Stability.—As one test of a human body's soundness is its capacity for reaching a great age, so it is high praise for a political system that it has stood no more changed than any institution must change in a changing world, and that it now gives every promise of durability. The people are profoundly attached to the form which their national life has taken. The Federal Constitution is, to their eyes, an almost sacred thing, an Ark of the Covenant, whereon no man may lay rash hands. Everywhere in Europe one hears schemes of radical change freely discussed. There is a strong monarchical party in France, a republican party in Italy and Spain. There are anarchists in Germany and Russia. Even in England, it is impossible to feel confident that any one of the existing institutions of the country will be standing fifty years hence. But in the United States the discussion of political problems[2] busies itself with details and assumes that the main lines must remain as they are for ever. This conservative spirit, jealously watchful even in small matters, sometimes prevents reforms, but it assures to the people an easy mind, and a trust in their future which they feel to be not only a present satisfaction but a reservoir of strength.

The best proof of the well-braced solidity of the system is that it survived the Civil War, changed only in a few points which have not greatly affected the balance of National and State powers. Another must have struck every European traveller who questions American publicists about the institutions of their country. When I first travelled in the United States, I used to ask thoughtful men, superior to the prejudices of custom, whether they did not think the States' system defective in such and such points, whether the legislative authority of Congress might not profitably be extended, whether the suffrage ought not to be restricted as regards negroes or immigrants, and so forth. Whether assenting or dissenting, the persons questioned invariably treated such matters as purely speculative, saying that the present arrangements were far too deeply rooted for their alteration to come within the horizon of practical politics. So when a serious trouble arises, a trouble which in Europe would threaten revolution, the people face it quietly, and assume that a tolerable solution will be found. At the disputed election of 1876, when each of the two great parties, heated with conflict, claimed that its candidate had been chosen President, and the Constitution supplied no way out of the difficulty, public tranquillity was scarcely disturbed, and the public funds fell but little. A method was invented of settling the question which both sides acquiesced in, and although the decision was a boundless disappointment to the party which had cast the majority of the popular vote, that party quietly submitted to lose those spoils of office whereon its eyes had been feasting.

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[1] See Chapter XXVI. in Vol. I.

[2] I speak of problems purely political. Some economical and social issues now in debate are deep-reaching; but it is significant that nobody (except a few recently-imported European revolutionists) proposes to overset the political order for the sake of getting his own way in such matters.

II. Feeling the law to be its own work, the people is disposed to obey the law.—In a preceding chapter I have examined occasional instances of the disregard of the law, and the supersession of its tardy methods by the action of the crowd. Such instances scarcely affect the credit which the Americans are specially eager to claim of being a law-abiding community. It is the best result that can be ascribed to the direct participation of the people in their government that they have the love of the maker for his work, that every citizen looks upon a statute as a regulation made by himself for his own guidance no less than for that of others, every official as a person he has himself chosen, and whom it is therefore his interest, with no disparagement to his personal independence, to obey. Plato thought that those who felt their own sovereignty would be impatient of all control: nor is it to be denied that the principle of equality may result in lowering the status and dignity of a magistrate. But as regards law and order the gain much exceeds the loss, for every one feels that there is no appeal from the law, behind which there stands the force of the nation. Such a temper can exist and bear these fruits only where minorities, however large, have learned to submit patiently to majorities, however small. But that is the one lesson which the American government through every grade and in every department daily teaches, and which it has woven into the texture of every citizen's mind. The habit of living under a rigid constitution superior to ordinary statutes —indeed two rigid constitutions, since the State Constitution is a fundamental law within its own sphere no less than is the Federal—intensifies this legality of view, since it may turn all sorts of questions which have not been determined by a direct vote of the people into questions of legal construction. It even accustoms people to submit to see their direct vote given in the enactment of a State Constitution nullified by the decision of a court holding that the Federal Constitution has been contravened. Every page of American history illustrates the wholesome results. The events of the last few years present an instance of the constraint which the people put on themselves in order to respect every form of law. The Mormons, a community not exceeding 140,000 persons, persistently defied all the efforts of Congress to root out polygamy, a practice eminently repulsive to American notions. If they inhabited a State, Congress could not have interfered at all, but as Utah is only a Territory, Congress has a power of legislating for it which overrides Territorial ordinances passed by the local legislature. Thus they were really at the mercy of Congress, had it chosen to employ violent methods. But by entrenching themselves behind the letter of the Constitution, they continued for many years to maintain their "peculiar institution" by evading the statutes passed against it and challenging a proof which under the common law rules of evidence it has been usually found impossible to give. Vehement declaimers hounded on Congress to take arbitrary means for the suppression of the practice, but Congress and the executive submitted to be outwitted rather than exceed their proper province, and succeeded at last (if indeed they have completely succeeded) only by a statute whose searching but moderate and strictly constitutional provisions the recalcitrants failed to evade. The same spirit of legality shows itself in misgoverned cities. Even where it is notorious that officials have been chosen by the grossest fraud and that they are robbing the city, the body of the people, however indignant, recognize the authority, and go on paying the taxes which a Ring levies, because strict legal proof of the frauds and robberies is not forthcoming. Wrong-doing supplies a field for the display of virtue.

III. There is a broad simplicity about the political ideas of the people, and a courageous consistency in carrying them out in practice. When they have accepted a principle, they do not shrink from applying it "right through," however disagreeable in particular cases some of the results may be. I am far from meaning that they are logical in the French sense of the word. They have little taste either for assuming abstract propositions or for syllogistically deducing practical conclusions therefrom. But when they have adopted a general maxim of policy or rule of action they show more faith in it than the English for instance would do, they adhere to it where the English would make exceptions, they prefer certainty and uniformity to the advantages which might occasionally be gained by deviation.[1] If this tendency is partly the result of obedience to a rigid constitution, it is no less due to the democratic dislike of exceptions and complexities, which the multitude finds not only difficult of comprehension but disquieting to the individual who may not know how they will affect him. Take for instance the boundless freedom of the press. There are abuses obviously incident to such freedom, and these abuses have not failed to appear. But the Americans deliberately hold that in view of the benefits which such freedom on the whole promises, abuses must be borne with and left to the sentiment of the people and the private law of libel to deal with. When the Ku Klux outrages disgraced several of the Southern States after the military occupation of those States had ceased, there was much to be said for sending back the troops to protect the negroes and northern immigrants. But the general judgment that things ought to be allowed to take their natural course prevailed; and the result justified this policy, for the outrages after a while died out, when ordinary self-government had been restored. When recently a gigantic organization of unions of working men, purporting to unite the whole of American labour, attempted to enforce its sentences against particular firms or corporations by a boycott in which all labourers were urged to join, there was displeasure, but no panic, no call for violent remedies. The prevailing faith in liberty and in the good sense of the mass was unshaken; and the result is already justifying this tranquil faith. This tendency is not an unmixed blessing, for it sometimes allows evils to go too long unchecked. But on the whole it works for good. In giving equability to the system of government it gives steadiness and strength. It teaches the people patience, accustoming them to expect relief only by constitutional means. It confirms their faith in their institutions, as friends value one another more when their friendship has stood the test of a journey full of hardships.

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[1] What has been said (Chapters XLIV. and XLV.) of special and local legislation by the State legislatures may seem to be an exception to this rule. Such legislation, however, is usually procured in the dark and by questionable means, and for the benefit of some individual or company.

Looking both to the National and to the State governments, it may be said that, with a few exceptions, no people has shown a greater regard for public obligations, and that no people has more prudently and honourably refrained from legislation bearing hardly upon the rich, or indeed upon any class whatever.

IV. It is a great merit of American government that it relies very little on officials, and arms them with little power of arbitrary interference. The reader who has followed the description of Federal authorities, State authorities, county and city or township authorities, may think there is a great deal of administration; but the reason why these descriptions are necessarily so minute is because the powers of each authority are so carefully and closely restricted. It is natural to fancy that a government of the people and by the people will be led to undertake many and various functions for the people, and in the confidence of its strength will constitute itself a general philanthropic agency for their social and economic benefit. There has doubtless been of late years a tendency in this direction, a tendency to which I have adverted in an earlier chapter. But it has taken the direction of acting through the law rather than through the officials. That is to say, when it prescribes to the citizen a particular course of action it has relied upon the ordinary legal sanctions, instead of investing the administrative officers with inquisitorial duties or powers that might prove oppressive, and when it has devolved active functions upon officials, they have been functions serving to aid the individual and the community rather than to interfere with or supersede the action of private enterprise. As I have dwelt on the evils which may flow from the undue application of the doctrine of direct popular sovereignty, so one must place to the credit of that doctrine and the arrangements it has dictated, the intelligence which the average native American shows in his political judgments, the strong sense he entertains of the duty of giving a vote, the spirit of alertness and enterprise, which has made him self-helpful above all other men.

V. There are no struggles between privileged and unprivileged orders, not even that perpetual strife of rich and poor which is the oldest disease of civilized states. One must not pronounce broadly that there are no classes, for in parts of the country social distinctions have begun to grow up. But for political purposes classes scarcely exist. No one of the questions which now agitate the nation is a question between rich and poor. Instead of suspicion, jealousy, and arrogance embittering the relations of classes, good feeling and kindliness reign. Everything that government, as the Americans have hitherto understood the term, can give them, the poor have already, political power, equal civil rights, a career open to all citizens alike, not to speak of that gratuitous higher as well as elementary education which on their own economic principles the United States might have abstained from giving, but which political reasons have led them to provide with so unstinting a hand. Hence the poor have had nothing to fight for, no grounds for disliking the well-to-do, no complaints to make against them. The agitation of the last few years has been directed, not against the richer classes generally, but against incorporated companies and a few individual capitalists, who have not unfrequently abused the powers which the privilege of incorporation conferred upon them, or employed their wealth to procure legislation opposed to the public interests. Where language has been used like that with which France and Germany are familiar, it has been used, not by native Americans, but by new-comers, who bring their Old World passions with them. Property is safe, because those who hold it are far more numerous than those who do not: the usual motives for revolution vanish; universal suffrage, even when vested in ignorant new-comers, can do comparatively little harm, because the masses have obtained everything which they could hope to attain except by a general pillage. And the native Americans, though the same cannot be said of some of the recent immigrants, are shrewd enough to see that the poor would suffer from such pillage no less than the rich.

A European censor may make two reflections on the way in which I have presented this part of the case. He will observe that, after all, it is no more than saying that when you have got to the bottom you can fall no farther. You may be wounded and bleeding for all that. And he will ask whether, if property is safe and contentment reigns, these advantages are not due to the economical conditions of a new and resourceful country, with an abundance of unoccupied land and mineral wealth, rather than to the democratic structure of the government. The answer to the first objection is, that the descent towards equality and democracy has involved no injury to the richer or better educated classes: to the second, that although much must doubtless be ascribed to the bounty of nature, her favours have been so used by the people as to bring about a prosperity, a general diffusion of property, an abundance of freedom, of equality, and of good feeling which furnish the best security against the recurrence in America of chronic Old World evils, even when her economic state shall have become less auspicious than it now is. Wealthy and powerful such a country must have been under any form of government, but the speed with which she has advanced, and the employment of the sources of wealth to diffuse comfort among millions of families, may be placed to the credit of stimulative freedom. Wholesome habits have been established among the people whose value will be found when the times of pressure approach, and though the troubles that have arisen between labour and capital may not soon pass away, the sense of human equality, the absence of offensive privileges distinguishing class from class, will make those troubles less severe than in Europe, where they are complicated by the recollection of old wrongs, by arrogance on the one side and envy on the other.

Some American panegyrists of democracy have weakened their own case by claiming all the triumphs which modern science has wrought in a land of unequalled natural resources as the result of a form of government. An active European race would probably have made America rich and prosperous under any government. But the volume and the character of the prosperity attained may be in large measure ascribed to the institutions of the country. As Mr. Charles W. Eliot observes in a singularly thoughtful address delivered a few months ago :—

"A great deal of moral vigour has been put into the material development of the United States; and it is clear that widespread comfort ought to promote the civilizing of a people. Sensible and righteous government ought ultimately to make a nation rich; and although this proposition cannot be directly reversed, yet diffused well-being, comfort, and material prosperity establish a fair presumption in favour of the government and the prevailing social conditions under which these blessings have been secured. . . .

"The successful establishment and support of religious institutions—churches, seminaries, and religious charities—upon a purely voluntary system, is an unprecedented achievement of the American democracy. In only three generations American democratic society has effected the complete separation of Church and State, a reform which no other people has ever attempted. Yet religious institutions are not stinted in the United States; on the contrary, they abound and thrive, and all alike are protected and encouraged, but not supported, by the State. Who has taken up the work which the State has relinquished? Somebody has had to do it, for the work is done. Who provides the money to build churches, pay salaries, conduct missions, and educate ministers? Who supplies the brains for organizing and maintaining these various activities? This is the work, not of a few officials, but of millions of intelligent and devoted men and women scattered through all the villages and cities of the broad land. The maintenance of churches, seminaries, and charities by voluntary contributions and by the administrative labours of volunteers, implies an enormous and incessant expenditure of mental and moral force. It is a force which must ever be renewed from generation to generation; for it is a personal force, constantly expiring, and as constantly to be replaced. Into the maintenance of the voluntary system in religion has gone a good part of the moral energy which three generations have been able to spare from the work of getting a living; but it is worth the sacrifice, and will be accounted in history one of the most remarkable feats of American public spirit and faith in freedom.

"A similar exhibition of diffused mental and moral energy has accompanied the establishment and the development of a system of higher instruction in the United States, with no inheritance of monastic endowments, and no gifts from royal or ecclesiastical personages disposing of great resources derived from the State, and with but scanty help from the public purse. Whoever is familiar with the colleges and universities of the United States knows that the creation of these democratic institutions has cost the life-work of thousands of devoted men. At the sacrifice of other aspirations, and under heavy discouragements and disappointments, but with faith and hope, these teachers and trustees have built up institutions, which, however imperfect, have cherished scientific enthusiasm, fostered piety, literature, and art, maintained the standards of honour and public duty, and steadily kept in view the ethical ideals which democracy cherishes. It has been a popular work, to which large numbers of people in successive generations have contributed of their substance or of their labour. The endowment of institutions of education, including libraries and museums, by private persons in the United States is a phenomenon without precedent or parallel, and is a legitimate effect of democratic institutions. Under a tyranny—were it that of a Marcus Aurelius —or an oligarchy—were it as enlightened as that which now rules Germany— such a phenomenon would be simply impossible. The University of Strasburg was lately established by an imperial decree, and is chiefly maintained out of the revenue of the State. Harvard University has been two hundred and fifty years in growing to its present stature, and is even now inferior at many points to the new University of Strasburg; but Harvard is the creation of thousands of persons, living and dead, rich and poor, learned and simple, who have voluntarily given it their time, thought, or money, and lavished upon it their affection; Strasburg exists by the mandate of the ruling few directing upon it a part of the product of ordinary taxation. Like the voluntary system in religion, the voluntary system in the higher education buttresses democracy; each demands from the community a large outlay of intellectual activity and moral vigour."

VI. The government of the Republic, limited and languid in ordinary times, is capable of developing immense vigour. It can pull itself together at moments of danger, can put forth unexpected efforts, can venture on stretches of authority transcending not only ordinary practice but even ordinary law. This is the result of the unity of the nation. A divided people is a weak people, even if it obeys a monarch; a united people is doubly strong when it is democratic, for then the force of each individual will swells the collective force of the government, encourages it, relieves it from internal embarrassments. Now the American people is united at moments of national concern from two causes. One is that absence of class divisions and jealousies which has been already described. The people are homogeneous: a feeling which stirs them stirs alike rich and poor, farmers and traders, Eastern men and Western men—one may now add, Southern men also. Their patriotism has ceased to be defiant, and is conceived as the duty of promoting the greatness and happiness of their country, a greatness which, as it does not look to war or aggression, does not redound specially, as it might in Europe, to the glory or benefit of the ruling caste or the military profession, but to that of all the citizens. The other source of unity is the tendency in democracies for the sentiment of the majority to tell upon the sentiment of a minority. That faith in the popular voice whereof I have already spoken strengthens every feeling which has once become strong, and makes it rush like a wave over the country, sweeping everything before it. I do not mean that the people become wild with excitement, for beneath their noisy demonstrations they retain their composure and shrewd view of facts. I mean only that the pervading sympathy stirs them to unwonted efforts. The steam is superheated, but the effect is seen only in the greater expansive force which it exerts. Hence a spirited executive can in critical times go forward with a courage and confidence possible only to those who know that they have a whole nation behind them. The people fall into rank at once. With that surprising gift for organization which they possess, they concentrate themselves on the immediate object; they dispense with the ordinary constitutional restrictions; they make personal sacrifices which remind one of the self-devotion of Roman citizens in the earlier and better days of Rome.

Speaking thus, I am thinking chiefly of the spirit evolved by the Civil War both in the North and South. But the sort of strength which a democratic government derives from its direct dependence on the people is seen in many smaller instances. In 1863, when on the making of a draft of men for the war, the Irish mob rose in New York City, excited by the advance of General Robert E. Lee into Pennsylvania, the State governor called out the troops, and by them restored order with a stern vigour which would have done credit to Radetzsky or Cavaignac. More than a thousand rioters were shot down, and public opinion entirely approved the slaughter. Years after the war, when the Orangemen of New York purposed to have a 12th of July procession through the streets, the Irish Catholics threatened to prevent it. The feeling of the native Americans was aroused at once; young men of wealth came back from their mountain and seaside resorts to fill the militia regiments which were called out to guard the procession, and the display of force was so overwhelming that no disturbance followed. These Americans had no sympathy with the childish and mischievous partisanship which leads the Orangemen to perpetuate Old World feuds on New World soil. But processions were legal, and they were resolved that the law should be respected, and the spirit of disorder repressed. They would have been equally ready to protect a Roman Catholic procession.

Given an adequate occasion, executive authority is more energetic in America, more willing to take strong measures, more sure of support from the body of the people than it is in England. I may further illustrate what I mean by referring to the view which I found ordinary Americans take some eight years ago—for as to their present views I express no opinion—of the troubles of the English government and parliament in their efforts to govern Ireland. They thought that England was erring in her refusal of the demand for trenchant land legislation, and for enlarged self-government; that she would never succeed in doing everything by the imperial parliament, and through officials taken from a particular class. They held that she ought to adopt a more broadly consistent and courageous policy, ought, in fact, to grant all such self-government as might be compatible with the maintenance of ultimate imperial control and imperial unity, and ought to take the results, be they pleasant or the reverse. But they also thought that she was erring by executive leniency, that the laws ought while they stood to be more unsparingly carried out, that parliamentary obstruction ought to be more severely repressed, that any attempts at disobedience ought to be met by lead and steel. "Make good laws," they said, "but see that whatever laws you make, you enforce. At present you are doing harm both ways. You are honouring neither liberty nor authority."[1]

VII. Democracy has not only taught the Americans how to use liberty without abusing it, and how to secure equality: it has also taught them fraternity. That word has gone out of fashion in the Old World, and no wonder, considering what was done in its name in 1793, considering also that it still figures in the programme of assassins. Nevertheless there is in the United States a sort of kindliness, a sense of human fellowship, a recognition of the duty of mutual help owed by man to man, stronger than anywhere in the Old World, and certainly stronger than in the upper or middle classes of England, France, or Germany. The natural impulse of every citizen in America is to respect every other citizen, and to feel that citizenship constitutes a certain ground of respect. The idea of each man's equal rights is so fully realized that the rich or powerful man feels it no indignity to take his turn among the crowd, and does not expect any deference from the poorest. An employer of labour has, I think, a keener sense of his duty to those whom he employs than employers have in Europe. He has certainly a greater sense of responsibility for the use of his wealth. The number of gifts for benevolent and other public purposes, the number of educational, artistic, literary, and scientific foundations, is larger than even in England, the wealthiest and most liberal of European countries. Wealth is generally felt to be a trust, and exclusiveness condemned not merely as indicative of selfishness, but as a sort of offence against the public. No one, for instance, thinks of shutting up his pleasure-grounds; he seldom even builds a wall round them, but puts up low railings or a palisade, so that the sight of his trees and shrubs is enjoyed by passers-by. That any one should be permitted either by opinion or by law to seal up many square miles of beautiful mountain country against tourists or artists is to the ordinary American almost incredible. Such things are to him the marks of a land still groaning under feudal tyranny.

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[1] Of course I cite the opinion of Americans not as entitled to weight in this matter—there were aspects of the question which they could not know—but merely as an illustration of their way of thinking.

It may seem strange to those who know how difficult European states have generally found it to conduct negotiations with the government of the United States, and who are accustomed to read in European newspapers the defiant utterances which American politicians address from Congress to the effete monarchies of the Old World, to be told that this spirit of fraternity has its influence on international relations also. Nevertheless if we look not at the irresponsible orators, who play to the lower feelings of a section of the people, but at the general sentiment of the whole people, we shall recognize that democracy makes both for peace and for justice as between nations. Despite the admiration for military exploits which the Americans have sometimes shown, no country is at bottom more pervaded by a hatred of war, and a sense that national honour stands rooted in national fair dealing. The nation is often misrepresented by its statesmen, but although it allows them to say irritating things and advance unreasonable claims, it has not for more than forty years permitted them to abuse its enormous strength, as most European nations possessed of similar strength have in time past abused theirs.

The characteristics of the nation which I have passed in review are not due solely to democratic government, but they have been strengthened by it, and they contribute to its solidity and to the smoothness of its working. As one sometimes sees an individual man who fails in life because the different parts of his nature seem unfitted to each other, so that his action swayed by contending influences, results in nothing definite or effective, so one sees nations whose political institutions are either in advance of or lag behind their social conditions, so that the unity of the body politic suffers, and the harmony of its movements is disturbed. America is not such a nation. It is made all of a piece; its institutions are the product of its economic and social conditions and the expression of its character. The new wine has been poured into new bottles: or to adopt a metaphor more appropriate to the country, the vehicle has been built with a lightness, strength, and elasticity which fit it for the roads it has to traverse.

CHAPTER XCVI

HOW FAR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS AVAILABLE FOR EUROPE

THERE are two substantial services which the study of history may render to politics. The one is to correct the use, which is generally the abuse, of the deductive or *a priori* method of reasoning in politics. The other is to save the politician from being misled by superficial historical analogies. He who repudiates the *a priori* method is apt to fancy himself a practical man, when, running to the other extreme, he argues directly from the phenomena of one age or country to those of another, and finding somewhat similar causes or conditions bids us to expect similar results. His error is as grave as that of the man who relies on abstract reasonings; for he neglects that critical examination of the premises from which every process of reasoning ought to start. The better trained any historical inquirer is, so much the more cautious will he be in the employment of what are called historical arguments in politics. He knows how necessary it is in attempting to draw any conclusion of practical worth for one country from the political experience of another, to allow for the points in which the countries differ, because among these points there are usually some which affect the soundness of the inference, making it doubtful whether that which holds true of the one will hold true of the other. The value of history for students of politics or practical statesmen lies rather in its power of quickening their insight, in its giving them a larger knowledge of the phenomena of man's nature as a political being and of the tendencies that move groups and communities of men, and thus teaching them how to observe the facts that come under their own eyes, and what to expect from the men with whom they have to deal. A thinker duly exercised in historical research will carry his stores of the world's political experience about with him, not as a book of prescriptions or recipes from which he can select one to apply to a given case, but rather as a physician carries a treatise on pathology which instructs him in the general principles to be followed in observing the symptoms and investigating the causes of the maladies that come before him. So, although the character of democratic government in the United States is full of instruction for Europeans, it supplies few conclusions directly bearing on the present politics of any European country, because both the strong and the weak points of the American people are not exactly repeated anywhere in the Old World, not even in such countries as France, Switzerland, and England. If the picture given of the phenomena of America in preceding chapters has been sufficiently full and clear, the inferences from it and such application as they may have to Europe will have already suggested themselves to the reader; if it is confused or defective, no statement of those inferences which might now be added could carry conviction. Instead, therefore, of restating the facts I shall here be content with briefly indicating the points in which the institutions of the United States and the methods employed in working them seem, if not quite directly, yet most nearly to touch and throw light upon European problems. America has in some respects anticipated European nations. She is walking before them along a path which they may probably follow. She carries behind her, to adopt a famous simile of Dante's, a lamp whose light helps those who come after her more than it always does herself, because some of the dangers she has passed through may not recur at any other point in her path; whereas they, following in her footsteps, may stumble in the same stony places, or be entangled in the quagmires from which she has suffered.

I. *Manhood Suffrage.*—This has been now adopted by so many peoples of Europe that they have the less occasion to study its transatlantic aspects. The wisest Americans, while appreciating the strength which it gives to their government, and conceiving that they could hardly have stopped short of it, hold that their recent experience does not invite imitation by European nations, unless at least Europeans adopt safeguards resembling those they have applied. With those safeguards the abolition of property qualifications has, so far as the native population is concerned, proved successful; but in the hands of the negroes at the South, or the newly enfranchised immigrants of the greatest cities, a vote is a means of mischief.

II. *The Civil Service.*—To keep minor administrative offices out of politics, to make them tenable for life and obtainable by merit instead of by private patronage, is at present the chief aim of American reformers. They are laboriously striving to bring their civil service up to the German or English level. If there is any lesson they would seek to impress on Europeans, it is the mischief of allowing politics to get into the hands of men who seek to make a living by them, and of suffering public offices to become the reward of party work. Rather, they would say, interdict office-holders from participation in politics; appoint them by competition, however absurd competition may sometimes appear, choose them by lot, choose them anyhow; only do not let offices be tenable at the pleasure of party chiefs and lie in the uncontrolled patronage of persons who can use them to strengthen their own political position.

III. *The Judiciary.*—The same observation applies to judicial posts, and with no less force. The American State Bench suffers both from the too prevalent system of popular election and from the scanty remuneration it receives. To procure men of character, learning, and intellectual power, and to keep them independent, ample remuneration must be paid, a life tenure secured, and the appointments placed in responsible hands. There is nothing in the English frame of government which thoughtful Americans so much admire as the maintenance of a high level of integrity and capacity in the judges, and they often express a hope that nothing will be done to lower the position of officials on whose excellence the well-being and commercial credit of a country largely depend.

IV. *Second Chambers.*—The Americans consider the division of every political legislature into two co-ordinate bodies to be absolutely necessary; and their opinion in this respect is the more valuable because several States tried for a time to work with one chamber, and because they are fully sensible of the inconveniences which the frequent collision of two chambers involves. In cities it does not appear that either the two-chambered or the one-chambered system shows any advantage over the other; but it is now seen that a city council ought not to be conceived of as a legislature, and that city government has altogether been planned and conducted too much on political and too little on commercial lines.

V. *Character and Working of Legislatures.*—Although the rule of representative chambers has been deemed the most characteristic feature of well-ordered free governments, as contrasted with the impetuous democracies of antiquity which legislated by primary assemblies, it must be confessed that the legislative bodies of the United States have not raised the credit of representative government. Whether this result is mainly due, as some think, to the disconnection of the Executive from the Legislature, or whether it must be traced to deeper sources of weakness, it is not without instruction for those who would in Europe vest in legislatures, and perhaps even in one-chambered legislatures, still wider powers of interference with administration than they now possess.

VI. *Length of Legislative Terms.*—The gain and the loss in having legislatures elected for short terms are sufficiently obvious. To a European the experience of Congress seems to indicate that the shortness of its term is rather to be avoided than imitated. It is not needed in order to secure the obedience of Congress to the popular will: it increases the cost of politics by making elections more frequent, and it keeps a considerable proportion of the legislators employed in learning a business which they are dismissed from as soon as they have learnt it.

VII. *A Rigid Constitution.*—Although several European states have now placed themselves under constitutions not alterable by their legislatures in the same way as ordinary statutes are altered, America furnishes in her State governments, as well as in her Federal government, by far the most instructive examples of the working of a system under which certain laws are made fundamental, and surrounded not only with a sort of consecration, but with provisions which make change comparatively difficult. There is nothing in their system with whose results, despite some obvious drawbacks, the multitude as well as the wise are so well satisfied; nothing which they more frequently recommend to the consideration of those Europeans who are alarmed at the progress which democracy makes in the Old World.

VIII. *Direct Legislation by the People.*—In this respect also the example of the several States—for the Federal government is not in point—deserves to be well studied by English and French statesmen. I greatly doubt if the plan, whose merits seem to me in America to outweigh its defects, would work as well in a large country as it does in communities of the size of the

American States. But its working there shows democracy in an aspect which has hitherto been too little regarded, and encourages the belief that in local matters this method of consulting the popular will might be employed with advantage more fully than England has as yet thought of applying it.

IX. *Local Self-government.*—Nothing has more contributed to give strength and flexibility to the government of the United States, or to train the masses of the people to work their democratic institutions, than the existence everywhere in the northern States of self-governing administrative units, such as townships, small enough to enlist the personal interest and be subject to the personal watchfulness and control of the ordinary citizen. Abuses have indeed sprung up in the cities, and in the case of the largest among them have become formidable, partly because the principle of local control has not been sufficiently adhered to. Nevertheless the system of local government as a whole has been not merely beneficial, but indispensable, and well deserves the study of those who in Europe are alive to the evils of centralization, and perceive that those evils will not necessarily diminish with a further democratization of such countries as England, Germany, and Italy. I do not say that in any of the great European states the mass of the rural population is equally competent with the American to work such a system: still it presents a model towards which European institutions ought to tend, while the examples of cities like New York and Philadelphia offer salutary warnings of what municipal governments ought to avoid.

X. *The Absence of a Church Establishment.*—As the discussion of ecclesiastical matters belongs to a later part of this book, I must be content with observing that in America everybody, to whatever religious communion he belongs, professes satisfaction with the complete separation of Church and State. This separation has not tended to make religion less of a force in America as respects either political or social reform, nor does it prevent the people from considering Christianity to be the national religion, and their commonwealth an object of the Divine care.

XI. *Party Machinery.*—The tremendous power of party organization has been described. It enslaves local officials, it increases the tendency to regard members of Congress as mere delegates, it keeps men of independent character out of local and national politics, it puts bad men into place, it perverts the wishes of the people, it has in some places set up a tyranny under the forms of democracy. Yet it is hard to see how free government can go on without parties, and certain that the strenuous rivalry of parties will not dispense with machinery. The moral for Europe seems to be the old one that "Perpetual vigilance is the price of freedom," that the best citizens must, as the Americans say, "take hold," must by themselves accepting posts in the organization keep it from falling into the hands of professionals, must entrust as few lucrative places as possible to popular election or political patronage, must leave reasonable discretion to their representatives in the national councils, must endeavour to maintain in politics the same standard of honour which guides them in private life. These are moral rather than political precepts, but party organization is one of those things which is good or bad according to the spirit with which it is worked.

XII. *The Unattractiveness of Politics.*—Partly from the influence of party machinery, partly from peculiarities of the Federal Constitution, partly from social and economical causes, the American system does not succeed in bringing the best men to the top. Yet in democracy more perhaps than in other governments, seeing it is the most delicate and difficult of governments, it is essential that the best men should come to the top. There is in this fact matter for Europeans to reflect upon, for they have assumed that political success will always attract ambition, and that public life will draw at least enough of the highest ability into its whirlpool. America disproves the assumption. Her example does not, however, throw much light on the way to keep politics attractive, for her conditions are dissimilar to those of European countries, and the whole problem depends as much on economic and social as upon political causes.

XIII. *The Power of Wealth.*—Plutocracy used to be considered a form of oligarchy, and opposed to democracy. But there is a strong plutocratic element infused into American democracy; and the fact that it is entirely unrecognized in constitutions makes it not less potent, and possibly more mischievous. The influence of money is one of the dangers which the people have always to guard against, for it assails not merely the legislatures but the party machinery, and its methods are as numerous as they are insidious.

To these scattered observations, which I have made abrupt in order to avoid being led into repetitions, I need hardly add the general moral which the United States teach, that the masses of the people are wiser, fairer, and more temperate in any matter to which they can be induced to bend their minds than most European philosophers have believed it possible for the masses of the people to be; because this is the moral which the preceding chapters on Public Opinion have been intended to make clear. But I must say once more that while indicating the foregoing points as those in which American experience seems most directly available for European states, no one who knows America will expect the problems she has solved, or those which still perplex her, to reappear in Europe in the same forms. Such facts—to mention two only out of many—as the abundance of land and the absence of menace from other Powers show how dissimilar are the conditions under which popular government works in the Eastern and in the Western hemisphere. Nothing can be more instructive than American experience if it be discreetly used, nothing will be more misleading to one who tries to apply it without allowing for the differences of economic and social environment.

PART VI

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER XCVII

THE BAR

Among the organized institutions of a country which, while not directly a part of the government, influence politics as well as society, the Bar has in England, Scotland, and France played a part only second to that played by the Church. Certainly no English institution is more curiously and distinctively English than this body, with its venerable traditions, its aristocratic sympathies, its strong, though now declining, corporate spirit, its affinity for certain forms of literature, its singular relation, half of dependence, half of condescension, to the solicitors, its friendly control over its official superiors, the judges. To see how such an institution has shaped itself and thriven in a new country is to secure an excellent means of estimating the ideas, conditions, and habits which affect and colour the social system of that country, as well as to examine one of the chief among the secondary forces of public life. It is therefore not merely for the sake of satisfying the curiosity of English lawyers that I propose to sketch some of the salient features of the legal profession as it exists in the United States, and to show how it has developed apart from the restrictions imposed on it in England by ancient custom, and under the unchecked operation of the laws of demand and supply.

When England sent out her colonies, the Bar, like most of her other institutions, reappeared upon the new soil, and had gained before the revolution of 1776 a position similar to that it held at home, not owing to any deliberate purpose on the part of those who led and ruled the new communities (for the Puritan settlers at least held lawyers in slight esteem), but because the conditions of a progressive society required its existence. That disposition to simplify and popularize law, to make it less of a mystery and bring it more within the reach of an average citizen, which is strong in modern Europe, is of course still stronger in a colony, and naturally tended in America to lessen the corporate exclusiveness of the legal profession, and do away with the antiquated rules which had governed it in England. On the other hand, the increasing complexity of relations in modern society, and the development of many new arts and departments of applied science, bring into an always clearer light the importance of a division of labour, and, by attaching greater value to special knowledge and skill, tend to limit and define the activity of every profession. In spite, therefore, of the democratic aversion to exclusive organizations, the lawyers in America soon acquired professional habits and a corporate spirit similar to that of their brethren in England; and some fifty years ago they had reached a power and social consideration relatively greater than the Bar has ever held on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

But the most characteristic peculiarity of the English system disappeared. In the United States, as in some parts of Europe, and most British colonies, there is no distinction between barristers and attorneys. Every lawyer, or "counsel," is permitted to take every kind of business: he may argue a cause in the Supreme Federal court at Washington, or write six-and-eightpenny letters from a shopkeeper to an obstinate debtor. He may himself conduct all the proceedings in a cause, confer with the client, issue the writ, draw the declaration, get together the evidence, prepare the brief, and conduct the case when it comes on in court. He is employed, not like the English barrister, by another professional man, but by the client himself, who seeks him out and makes his bargain directly with him, just as in England people call in a physician or make their bargain with an architect. In spite, however, of this union of all a lawyer's functions in the same person, considerations of practical convenience have in many places established a division of labour similar to that existing in England. Where two or more lawyers are in partnership, it often happens that one member undertakes the court work and the duties of the advocate, while another or others transact the rest of the business, see the clients, conduct correspondence, hunt up evidence, prepare witnesses for examination, and manage the thousand little things for which a man goes to his attorney. The merits of the plan are obvious. It saves the senior member from drudgery, and from being distracted by petty details; it introduces the juniors to business, and enables them to profit by the experience and knowledge of the mature practitioner; it secures to the client the benefit of a closer attention to details than a leading counsel could be expected to give, while yet the whole of his suit is managed in the same office, and the responsibility is not divided, as in England, between two independent personages. However, the custom of forming legal partnerships is one which prevails much more extensively in some parts of the Union than in others. In Boston and New York, for instance, it is common, and I think in the Western cities; in the towns of Connecticut and in Philadelphia one is told that it is rather the exception. Even apart from the arrangement which distributes the various kinds of business among the members of a firm, there is a certain tendency for work of a different character to fall into the hands of different men. A beginner is of course glad enough to be employed in any way, and takes willingly the smaller jobs; he will conduct a defence in a police-court, or manage the recovery of a tradesman's petty debt. I remember having been told by a very eminent counsel that when an old apple-woman applied to his son to have her market licence renewed, which for some reason had been withdrawn, he had insisted on the young man's taking up the case. As he rises, it becomes easier for him to select his business, and when he has attained real eminence he may confine himself entirely to the higher walks, arguing cases and giving opinions, but leaving most of the preparatory work and all the communications with the client to be done by the juniors who are retained along with him. He is, in fact, with the important difference that he is liable for any negligence, very much in the position of an English Queen's counsel, and his services are sought, not only by the client, but by another counsel, or firm of counsel, who have an important suit in hand, to which they feel themselves unequal. He may however be, and often is, retained directly by the client; and in that case he is allowed to retain a junior to aid him, or to desire the client to do so, naming the man he wishes for, a thing which the etiquette of the English bar is supposed to forbid. In every great city there are several practitioners of this kind, men who only undertake the weightiest business at the largest fees; and even in the minor towns court practice is in the hands of a comparatively small group. In one New England city, for instance, whose population is about 50,000, there are, I was told, some sixty or seventy practising lawyers, of whom not more than ten or twelve ever conduct a case in court, the remainder doing what Englishmen would call attorney's and conveyancer's work.

Whatever disadvantages this system of one undivided legal profession has, it has one conspicuous merit, on which any one who is accustomed to watch the career of the swarm of young men who annually press into the Temple or Lincoln's Inn full of bright hopes, may be pardoned for dwelling. It affords a far better prospect of speedy employment and an active professional life, than the beginner who is not "strongly backed" can look forward to in England. Private friends can do much more to help a young man, since he gets business direct from the client instead of from a solicitor; he may pick up little bits of work which his prosperous seniors do not care to have, may thereby learn those details of practice of which in England a barrister often remains ignorant, may gain experience and confidence in his own powers, may teach himself how to speak and how to deal with men, may gradually form a connection among those for whom he has managed trifling matters, may commend himself to the good opinion of older lawyers, who will be glad to retain him as their junior when they have a brief to give away. So far he is better off than the young barrister in England. He is also, in another way, more favourably placed than the young English solicitor. He is not taught to rely in cases of legal difficulty upon the opinion of another person. He is not compelled to seek his acquaintances among the less cultivated members of the profession, to the majority of whom law is not much of an art and nothing of a science. He does not see the path of an honourable ambition, the opportunities of forensic oratory, the access to the judicial bench, irrevocably closed against him, but has the fullest freedom to choose whatever line his talents fit him for. Every English lawyer's experience, as it furnishes him with cases where a man was obliged to remain an attorney who would have shone as a counsel, so also suggests cases of persons who were believed, and with reason believed, by their friends to possess the highest forensic abilities, but literally never had the chance of displaying them, and languished on in obscurity, while others in every way inferior to them became, by mere dint of practice, fitter for ultimate success. Quite otherwise in America. There, according to the universal witness of laymen and lawyers, no man who is worth his salt, no man who combines fair talents with reasonable industry, fails to earn a competence, and to have, within the first six or seven years of his career, an opportunity of showing whether he has in him the makings of something great. This is not due, as might be supposed, merely to the greater opportunities which everybody has in a new country, and which make America the working man's paradise, for, in the eastern States at least, the professions are nearly as crowded as they are in England. It is owing to the greater variety of practice which lies open to a young man, and to the fact that his patrons are the general public, and not as in England, a limited class who have their own friends and connections to push. Certain it is that American lawyers profess themselves unable to understand how it can happen that deserving men remain briefless for the best years of their life, and are at the last obliged to quit the profession in disgust. In fact, it seems to require an effort of politeness on their part to believe that such a state of things can exist as that with which England and Scotland have grown so familiar as to deem it natural and legitimate. A further result of the more free and open character of the profession may be seen in the absence of many of those rules of etiquette which are, in theory at least, observed by the English lawyer. It is not thought undignified, except in the great cities of the eastern States, for a counsel to advertize himself in the newspapers. He is allowed to make whatever bargain he pleases with his client: he may do work for nothing, or may stipulate for a commission on the result of the suit or a share in whatever the verdict produces—a practice which is open to grave objections, and which in the opinion of more than one eminent American lawyer, has produced a good deal of the mischief which caused it to be seventeen centuries ago prohibited at Rome. However in some cities the sentiment of the Bar seems to be opposed to the practice, and in some States there are rules limiting it. A counsel can, except in New Jersey (a State curiously conservative in some points), bring an action for the recovery of his fees, and, *pari ratione*, can be sued for negligence in the conduct of a cause.

A lawyer can readily gain admission to practise in any Federal court, and may by courtesy practise in the courts of every State. But each State has its own Bar, that is to say, there is no general or national organization of the legal profession, the laws regulating which are State laws, differing in each of the thirty-eight commonwealths. In no State does there exist any body resembling the English Inns of Court, with the right of admitting to the practice of public advocacy and of exercising a disciplinary jurisdiction: and in very few have any professional associations resembling the English Incorporated Law Society obtained statutory recognition. Usually the State law vests in the courts the duty of admitting persons as attorneys, and of excluding them if guilty of any serious offence. But the oversight of the judges is necessarily so lax that in many States and cities voluntary bar associations have been formed with the view of exercising a sort of censorship over the profession. Such associations can blackball bad candidates for admission, and expel offenders against professional honour; and they are said to accomplish some good in this way. More rarely they institute proceedings to have black sheep removed from practice. Being virtually an open profession like stockbroking or engineering, the profession has less of a distinctive character and corporate feeling than the barristers of England or France have, and I think rather less than the solicitors of England have. Neither wig, bands, gown, cap, nor any other professional costume is worn, and this circumstance, trivial as it may seem, no doubt contributes to weaken the sentiment of professional privilege and dignity, and to obscure the distinction between the advocate as an advocate, not deemed to be pledging himself to the truth of any fact or the soundness of any argument but simply presenting his client's case as it is presented to him, and the advocate in his individual capacity.

In most States the courts impose some sort of examination on persons seeking to be admitted to practice, often delegating the duty of questioning the candidate to two or three counsel named for the purpose. Candidates are sometimes required to have read for a certain period in a lawyer's office, but this condition is easily evaded, and the examination, nowhere strict, is often little better than a form or a farce. Notwithstanding this laxity, the level of legal attainment is in some cities as high or higher than among either the barristers or the solicitors of

London. This is due to the extraordinary excellence of many of the law schools. I do not know if there is anything in which America has advanced more beyond the mother country than in the provision she makes for legal education.[1] Twenty-five years ago, when there was nothing that could be called a scientific school of law in England, the Inns of Court having practically ceased to teach law, and the universities having allowed their two or three old chairs to fall into neglect and provided scarce any new ones, many American universities possessed well-equipped law departments, giving a highly efficient instruction. Even now, when England has bestirred herself to make a more adequate provision for the professional training of both barristers and solicitors, this provision seems insignificant beside that which we find in the United States, where, not to speak of minor institutions, all the leading universities possess law schools, in each of which every branch of Anglo-American law, *i.e.* common law and equity as modified by Federal and State constitutions and statutes, is taught by a strong staff of able men, sometimes including the most eminent lawyers of the State.[2] Here at least the principle of demand and supply works to perfection. No one is obliged to attend these courses in order to obtain admission to practice, and the examinations are generally too lax to require elaborate preparation. But the instruction is found so valuable, so helpful for professional success, that young men throng the lecture halls, willingly spending two or three years in the scientific study of the law which they might have spent in the chambers of a practising lawyer as pupils or as junior partners. The indirect results of this theoretic study in maintaining a philosophical interest in the law among the higher class of practitioners, and a higher sense of the dignity of their profession, are doubly valuable in that absence of corporate organizations on which I have already commented.[1]

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[1] Modern England seems to stand alone in her comparative neglect of the theoretic study of law as a preparation for legal practice. Other countries, from Germany at the one end of the scale of civilization to the Mohammedan East at the other end, exact three, four, five, or even more years spent in this study before the aspirant begins his practical work.

[2] This instruction is in nearly all the law schools confined to Anglo-American law, omitting theoretic jurisprudence (*i.e.* the science of law in general), Roman law, except, of course, in Louisiana, where the Civil Law is the basis of the code, and international law. Where the latter subjects are taught, which rarely happens, they are usually included in the historical curriculum. In some law schools much educational value is attributed to the moot courts in which the students are set to argue cases, a method much in vogue in England two centuries ago.

In what may be called habits of legal thought, their way of regarding legal questions, their attitude towards changes in the form or substance of the law, American practitioners, while closely resembling their English brethren, seem on the whole more conservative. Such law reforms as have been effected in England during the last thirty years have mostly come from the profession itself. They have been carried through Parliament by attorneys-general or lord-chancellors, usually with the tacit approval of the bar and the solicitors. The masses and their leaders have seldom ventured to lay profane fingers on the law, either in despair of understanding it or because they saw nearer and more important work to be done. Hence the profession has in England been seldom roused to oppose projects of change; and its division into two branches, with interests sometimes divergent, weakens its political influence. In the United States, although the legislatures are largely composed of lawyers, many of these have little practice, little knowledge, comparatively little professional feeling. Hence there is usually a latent and sometimes an open hostility between the better kind of lawyers and the impulses of the masses, seeking probably at the instigation of some lawyer of a demagogic turn to carry through legal changes. The defensive attitude which the upper part of the profession is thus led to assume fosters those conservative instincts which a system of case law engenders, and which are further stimulated by the habit of constantly recurring to a fundamental instrument, the Federal Constitution. Thus one finds the same dislike to theory, the same attachment to old forms, the same unwillingness to be committed to any broad principle which distinguished the orthodox type of English lawyers sixty years ago. Prejudices survive on the shores of the Mississippi which Bentham assailed seventy years ago when those shores were inhabited by Indians and beavers; and in Chicagò, a place which living men remember as a lonely swamp, special demurrers, replications *de injuria*, and various elaborate formalities of pleading which were swept away by the English Common Law Procedure Acts of 1850 and 1852, flourish and abound to this day.

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[1] Some of the best American law-books, as for instance that admirable series which has made Justice Story famous, have been produced as lectures given to students. Story was professor at Harvard while judge of the Supreme court, and used to travel to and from Washington to give his lectures. A few years ago there were several men in large practice who used to teach in the law schools out of public spirit and from their love of the subject, rather than in respect of the comparatively small payment they received.

Is the American lawyer more like an English barrister or an English solicitor? This depends on the position he holds. The leading counsel of a city recall the former class, the average practitioners of the smaller places and rural districts the latter. But as every American lawyer has the right of advocacy in the highest courts, and is accustomed to advise clients himself instead of sending a case for opinion to a counsel of eminence, the level of legal knowledge—that is to say, knowledge of the principles and substance of the law, and not merely of the rules of practice—is somewhat higher than among English solicitors, while the familiarity with details of practice is more certain to be found than among English barristers. Neither an average barrister nor an average solicitor is so likely to have a good working all-round knowledge of the whole field of common law, equity, admiralty law, probate law, patent law, as an average American city practitioner, nor to be so smart and quick in applying his knowledge. On the other hand, it must be admitted that England possesses more men eminent as draftsmen, though perhaps fewer eminent in patent cases, and that much American business, especially in State courts, is done in a way which English critics might call lax and slovenly.

I have already observed that both in Congress and in most of the State legislatures the lawyers outnumber the persons belonging to other walks of life. Nevertheless, they have not that hold on politics now which they had in the first and second generations of the Republic. Politics have, in falling so completely into the hands of party organizations, become more distinctly a separate profession, and an engrossing profession, which a man occupied with his clients cannot follow. Thus among the leading lawyers, the men who win wealth and honour by advocacy, comparatively few enter a legislative body or become candidates for public office. Their influence is still great when any question arises on which the profession, or the more respectable part of it, stands together. Many bad measures have been defeated in State legislatures by the action of the Bar, many bad judicial appointments averted. Their influence strengthens the respect of the people for the Constitution, and is felt by the judges when they are called to deal with constitutional questions. But taking a general survey of the facts of to-day, as compared with those of sixty years ago, it is clear that the Bar counts for less as a guiding and restraining power, tempering the crudity or haste of democracy by its attachment to rule and precedent, than it did then.

A similar decline, due partly to this diminished political authority, may be observed in its social position. In a country where there is no titled class, no landed class, no military class, the chief distinction which popular sentiment can lay hold of as raising one set of persons above another is the character of their occupation, the degree of culture it implies, the extent to which it gives them an honourable prominence. Such distinctions carried great weight in the early days of the Republic, when society was smaller and simpler than it has now become. But of late years not only has the practice of public speaking ceased to be, as it once was, almost their monopoly, not only has the direction of politics slipped in great measure from their hands, but the growth of huge mercantile fortunes and of a financial class has, as in France and England, lowered the relative importance and dignity of the Bar. An individual merchant holds perhaps no better place compared with an average individual lawyer than he did forty years ago; but the millionaire is a much more frequent and potent personage than he was then, and outshines everybody in the country. Now and then a brilliant orator or writer achieves fame of a different and higher kind; but in the main it is the glory of successful commerce which in America and Europe now draws wondering eyes. Wealth, it is true, is by no means out of the reach of the leading lawyers: yet still not such wealth as may be and constantly is amassed by contractors, railwaymen, financial speculators, hotel proprietors, newspaper owners, and retail storekeepers. The incomes of the first counsel in cities like New York are probably as large as those of the great English leaders. I have heard firms mentioned as dividing a sum of $250,000 (£50,000) a year, of which the senior member may probably have $100,000. It is, however, only in two or three of the greatest cities that such incomes can be made, and possibly not more than fifteen counsel in the whole country make by their profession more than $50,000 a year. Next after wealth, education may be taken to be the element or quality on which social standing in a purely democratic country depends. In this respect the Bar ranks high. Most lawyers have had a college training, and are, by the necessity of their employment, persons of some mental cultivation; in the older towns they, with the leading clergy, form the intellectual *élite* of the place, and maintain worthily the literary traditions of the Roman, French, English, and Scottish bars. But education is so much more diffused than formerly, and cheap literature so much more abundant, that they do not stand so high above the multitude as they once did. It may, however, still be said that the law is the profession which an active youth of intellectual tastes naturally takes to, that a large proportion of the highest talent of the country may be found in its ranks, and that almost all the first statesmen of the present and the last generation have belonged to it, though many soon resigned its practice. It is also one of the links which best serves to bind the United States to England. The interest of the higher class of American lawyers in the English law, bar, and judges, is wonderfully fresh and keen. An English barrister, if properly authenticated, is welcomed as a brother of the art, and finds the law reports of his own country as sedulously read and as acutely criticized as he would in the Temple.[1]

I have left to the last the question which a stranger finds it most difficult to answer. The legal profession has in every country, apart from its relation to politics, very important functions to discharge in connection with the administration of justice. Its members are the confidential advisers of private persons, and the depositaries of their secrets. They have it in their power to promote or to restrain vexatious litigation, to become accomplices in chicane, or to check the abuse of legal rights in cases where morality may require men to abstain from exacting all that the letter of the law allows. They can exercise a powerful influence upon the magistracy by shaming an unjust judge, or by misusing the ascendency which they may happen to possess over a weak judge, or a judge who has something to hope for from them. Does the profession in the United States rise to the height of these functions, and in maintaining its own tone, help to maintain the tone of the community, especially of the mercantile community, which, under the pressure of competition, seldom observes a higher moral standard than that which the law exacts? So far as my limited opportunities for observation enable me to answer this question, I should answer it by saying that the profession, taken as a whole, seems to stand on a level with the profession, also taken as a whole, in England. But I am bound to add that some judicious American observers hold that the last thirty years have witnessed a certain decadence in the Bar of the greater cities. They say that the growth of enormously rich and powerful corporations, willing to pay vast sums for questionable services, has seduced the virtue of some counsel whose eminence makes their example important, and that in a few States the degradation of the Bench has led to secret understandings between judges and counsel for the perversion of justice. Whether these alarms be well founded I cannot tell. It is only in a few places that the conditions which give rise to them exist.

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[1] American lawyers remark that the English Law Reports have become less useful since the number of decisions upon the construction of statutes has so greatly increased. They complain of the extreme difficulty of keeping abreast of the vast multitude of cases reported in their own country, from the courts of thirty-eight States as well as Federal courts.

As the question of fusing the two branches of the legal profession into one body has been of late much canvassed in England, a few words may be expected as to the light which American experience throws upon it.

There are two sets of persons in England who complain of the present arrangements—a section of the solicitors, who are debarred from the exercise of advocacy, and therefore from the great prizes of the profession; and a section of the junior bar, whose members, depending entirely on the patronage of the solicitors, find themselves, if they happen to have no private connections among that branch of the profession, unable to get employment, since a code of etiquette forbids them to undertake certain sorts of work, or to do work except on a fixed scale of fees, or to take court work directly from a client, or to form partnerships with other counsel. An attempt has been made to enlist the general public in favour of a change, by the argument that law would be cheapened by allowing the attorney to argue and carry through the courts a cause which he has prepared for trial; but so far the general public has not responded.

There are three points of view from which the merits or demerits of a change may be regarded. These are the interests respectively of the profession, of the client, and of the community at large.

As far as the advantage of the individual members of the profession is concerned, the example of the United States seems to show that the balance of advantage is in favour of uniting barristers and attorneys in one body. The attorney would have a wider field, greater opportunities of distinguishing himself, and the legitimate satisfaction of seeing his cause through all its stages. The junior barrister would find it easier to get on, even as an advocate, and, if he discovered that advocacy was not his line, could subside into the perhaps not less profitable or agreeable function of a solicitor. The senior barrister or leader might suffer, for his attention would be more distracted by calls of different kinds.

The gain to the client is still clearer; and even those (very few) American counsel who say that for their own sake they would prefer the English plan, admit that the litigant is more expeditiously and effectively served where he has but one person to look to and deal with throughout. It does not suit him, say the Americans, to be lathered in one shop and shaved in another; he likes to go to his lawyer, tell him the facts, get an off-hand opinion, if the case be a simple one (as it is nine times out of ten), and issue his writ with some confidence: whereas under the English system he might either have to wait till a regular case for the opinion of counsel was drawn, sent to a barrister, and returned, written on, after some days, or else take the risk of bringing an action which turned out to be ill-founded. It may also be believed that a case is, on the whole, better dealt with when it is kept in one office from first to last, and managed by one person, or by partners who are in constant communication. Mistakes and oversights are less likely to occur, since the advocate knows the facts better, and has almost invariably seen and questioned the witnesses before he comes into court. It may indeed be said that an advocate does his work with more ease of conscience, and perhaps more *sang-froid*, when he knows nothing but his instructions. But American practitioners are all clear that they are able to serve their clients better than they could if the responsibility were divided between the man who prepares the case, and the man who argues or addresses the jury. Indeed, I have often heard them say that they could not understand how English counsel, who rarely see the witnesses beforehand, were able to conduct witness causes satisfactorily.

If, however, we go on to ask what is the result to the whole community of having no distinction between the small body of advocates and the large body of attorneys, approval will be more hesitating. Society is interested in the maintenance of a high tone among those who have that influence on the administration of justice and the standard of commercial morality which has been already adverted to. It is easier to maintain such a tone in a small body, which can be kept under a comparatively strict control and cultivate a warm professional feeling than in a large body, many of whose members are practically just as much men of business as lawyers. And it may well be thought that the conscience or honour of a member of either branch of the profession is exposed to less strain where the two branches are kept distinct. The counsel is under less temptation to win his cause by doubtful means, since he is removed from the client by the interposition of the attorney, and therefore less personally identified with the client's success. He probably has not that intimate knowledge of the client's affairs which he must have if he had prepared the whole case, and is therefore less likely to be drawn into speculating, to take an obvious instance, in the shares of a client company, or otherwise playing a double and disloyal game. Similarly it may be thought that the attorney also is less tempted than if he appeared himself in court, and were not obliged, in carrying out the schemes of a fraudulent client, to call in the aid of another practitioner, amenable to a strict professional discipline. Where the advocate is also the attorney, he may be more apt, when he sees the witnesses, to lead them, perhaps unconsciously, to stretch their recollection; and it is harder to check the practice of paying for legal services by a share of the proceeds of the action.

Looking at the question as a whole, I doubt whether the result of a study of the American arrangements is calculated to commend them for imitation, or to induce England to allow her historic bar to be swallowed up and vanish in the more numerous branch of the profession. Those arrangements, however, suggest some useful minor changes in the present English rules. The passage from each branch to the other might be made easier; barristers might be permitted to form open (as they now sometimes do covert) partnerships among themselves; the education of students of both branches might be conducted together in the professional law schools as well as in the universities.

CHAPTER XCVIII

THE BENCH

So much has already been said regarding the constitution and jurisdiction of the various courts, Federal and State, that what remains to be stated regarding the judicial bench need refer only to its personal and social side. What is the social standing of the judges, the average standard of their learning and capacity, their integrity and fidelity in the discharge of functions whose gravity seems to increase with the growth of wealth?

The English reader who wishes to understand the American judiciary ought to begin by realizing the fact that his conception of a judge is purely English, not applicable to any other country. For some centuries Englishmen have associated the ideas of power, dignity, and intellectual eminence with the judicial office; a tradition, shorter no doubt, but still of respectable length, has made them regard it as incorruptible. The judges are among the greatest permanent officials of the state. They have earned their place by success, more or less brilliant, but almost always considerable, in the struggles of the Bar; they are removable by the Crown only upon an address of both Houses of Parliament; they enjoy large incomes and great social respect. Some of them sit in the House of Lords; some are members of the Privy Council. When they traverse the country on their circuits, they are received by the High Sheriff of each county with the ceremonious pomp of the Middle Ages, and followed hither and thither by admiring crowds. The criticisms of an outspoken press rarely assail their ability, hardly ever their fairness. Even the Bar, which watches them daily, which knows all their ins and outs (to use an American phrase) both before and after their elevation, treats them with more respect than is commonly shown by the clergy to the bishops. Thus the English form their conception of the judge as a personage necessarily and naturally dignified and upright; and, having formed it, they carry it abroad with them like their notions of land tenure and other insular conceptions, and are astonished when they find that it does not hold in other countries. It is a fine and fruitful conception, and one which one might desire to see accepted everywhere, though it has been secured at the cost of compelling litigants to carry to London much business which in other countries would have been dealt with in local courts. But it is peculiar to England; the British judge is as abnormal as the British Constitution, and owes his character to a not less curious and complex combination of conditions. In most parts of the Continent the judge, even of the superior courts, does not hold a very high social position. He is not chosen from the ranks of the Bar, and has not that community of feeling with it which England has found so valuable. Its leaders outshine him in France; the famous professors of law often exert a greater authority in Germany. His independence, and even purity, have been at times by no means above suspicion. In no part of Europe do his wishes and opinions carry the same weight, or does he command the same deference as in England. The English ought not, therefore, to be surprised at finding him in America different from what they expect, for it is not so much his inferiority there that is exceptional as his excellence in England.

In America, the nine Federal judges of the Supreme court retain much of the dignity which surrounds the English Supreme Court of Judicature. They are almost the only officials who are appointed for life, and their functions are of the utmost importance to the smooth working of the Constitution. Accordingly great public interest is felt in the choice of a judge, and the post is an object of ambition. Though now and then an eminent lawyer may decline it because he is already making by practice five times as much as the salary it carries, still there has been no difficulty in finding first-rate men to fill the court. The minor Federal judges are usually persons of ability and experience. They are inadequately paid, but the life tenure makes the place desired and secures respect for it.

Of the State judges it is hard to speak generally, because there are great differences between State and State. In six or seven commonwealths, of which Massachusetts is the best example among eastern and Michigan among western States, they stand high—that is to say, the post will attract a prosperous barrister though he will lose in income, or a law professor though he must sacrifice his leisure. But in some States it is otherwise. A place on the bench of the superior courts carries little honour, and commands but slight social consideration. It is lower than that of an English county court judge or stipendiary magistrate, or of a Scotch sheriff-substitute. It raises no presumption that its holder is able or cultivated or trusted by his fellow-citizens. He may be all of these, but if so, it is in respect of his personal merits that he will be valued, not for his official position. Often he stands below the leading members of the State or city bar in all these points and does not move in the best society.[1] Hence a leading counsel seldom accepts the post, and men often resign a judgeship, or when their term of office expires do not seek re-election, but return to practice at the bar.[2] Hence, too, a judge is not expected to set an example of conformity to the conventional standards of decorum. No one is surprised to see him in low company, or to hear, in the ruder parts of the South and West, that he took part in a shooting affray. He is as welcome to be "a child of nature and of freedom" as any private citizen.

The European reader may think that these facts not only betoken but tend to perpetuate a low standard of learning and capacity among the State judges, and from this low standard he will go on to conclude that justice must be badly administered, and will ask with surprise why an intelligent and practical people allow this very important part of their public work to be ill discharged. I shrink from making positive statements on so large a matter as the administration of justice over a vast country whose States differ in many respects. But so far as I could ascertain, civil justice is better administered than might be expected from the character which the Bench bears in most of the States. In the Federal courts and in the superior courts of the six or seven States just mentioned it is equal to the justice dispensed in the superior courts of England, France, and Germany. In the remainder it is inferior, that is to say, civil trials, whether the issue be of law or of fact, more frequently give an unsatisfactory result; the opinions delivered by the judges are wanting in scientific accuracy, and the law becomes loose and uncertain. This inferiority is more or less marked according to the general tone of the State, the better States taking more pains to secure respectable men. That it is everywhere less marked than *a priori* reasonings would have suggested, may be ascribed partly to the way shrewd juries have of rendering substantially just verdicts, partly to the ability of the Bar, whose arguments make up for a judge's want of learning, by giving him the means of reaching a sound decision, partly to that native acuteness of Americans which enables them to handle any sort of practical work, roughly perhaps, but well enough for the absolute needs of the case. The injury to the quality of State law is mitigated by the fact that abundance of good law is produced by the Federal courts, by the highest courts of the best States, and by the judges of England, whose reported decisions are frequently referred to. Having constantly questioned those I met on the subject, I have heard comparatively few complaints from commercial men as to the inefficiency of State tribunals, and not many even from the leading lawyers, though their interest in the scientific character of law makes them severe critics of current legislation, and opponents of those schemes for codifying the common law which have been dangled before the multitude in several States. It is otherwise as regards criminal justice. It is accused of being slow, uncertain, and unduly lenient both to crimes of violence and to commercial frauds. Yet the accusers charge the fault less on the judges than on the soft-heartedness of juries, and on the facilities for escape which a cumbrous and highly technical procedure, allowing numerous opportunities for interposing delays and raising points of law, provides for prisoners.[1] Indulgence to prisoners is now as marked as harshness to them was in England before the days of Bentham and Romilly. The legislatures must bear the blame of this procedure, though stronger men on the Bench would more often overrule trivial points of law and expedite convictions.

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[1] A prominent New Yorker once said to me, speaking of one of the chief judges of the city, "I don't think him such a bad fellow; he has always been very friendly to me, and would give me a midnight injunction or do anything else for me at a moment's notice. And he's not an ill-natured man. But, of course, he's the last person I should dream of asking to my house." Things are better in New York to day.

[2] Most States are full of ex-judges practising at the bar, the title being continued as a matter of courtesy to the person who has formerly enjoyed it. For social purposes, once a judge, always a judge.

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[1] Even judges suffer from this misplaced leniency. I heard of a case which happened in Kentucky a few years ago. A decree of foreclosure was pronounced by a respected judge against a defendant of good local family connections. The judge could not do otherwise than pronounce it, for there was practically no defence. As the judge was walking from the court to the railway station the same afternoon the defendant, who was waiting near the road, shot him dead. It was hard to avoid arresting and trying a man guilty of so flagrant an offence, so arrested he was, tried, and convicted; but on an allegation of lunacy being put

The causes which have lowered the quality of the State judges have been referred to in previous chapters. Shortly stated they are: the smallness of the salaries paid, the limited tenure of office, often for seven years only, and the method of appointment, nominally by popular election, practically by the agency of party wirepullers. The first two causes have prevented the ablest lawyers, the last often prevents the most honourable men, from seeking the post. All are the result of democratic theory, of the belief in equality and popular sovereignty pushed to extremes. And this theory has aggravated the mischief in withdrawing from the judge, when it has appointed him, those external badges of dignity which, childish as they may appear to the philosopher, have power over the imagination of the mass of mankind, and are not without a useful reflex influence on the person whom they surround, raising his sense of his position, and reminding him of its responsibilities. No American magistrate, except the judges of the Supreme court when sitting at Washington, and the judges of the New York Court of Appeals at Albany, wears any robe of office or other distinctive dress, or has any attendant to escort him,[1] or is in any respect treated differently from an ordinary citizen. Popular sentiment tolerates nothing that seems to elevate a man above his fellows, even when his dignity is really the dignity of the people who have put him where he is. I remember in New York eighteen years ago to have been taken into one of the courts. An ill-omened looking man, flashily dressed, and rude in demeanour, was sitting behind a table, two men in front were addressing him, the rest of the room was given up to disorder. Had one not been told that he was a judge of the highest court of the city, one might have taken

forward the Court of Appeals ordered a new trial; he was acquitted on the ground of insanity, under instructions based on the opinion of an appellate court, and presently allowed to escape into Ohio from the asylum to which he had been consigned. There was, I was told, a good deal of sympathy for him.

Cheisly of Dalry, the father of the famous Lady Grange, got into trouble in Scotland early in last century for shooting a judge who had decided against him, but was not so indulgently dealt with.

[1] Save that in the rural counties of Massachusetts and possibly of some other New England States, the sheriff as in England, escorts the judges to and from the Court-house.

him for a criminal. His jurisdiction was unlimited in amount, and though an appeal lay from him to the Court of Appeals of the State, his power of issuing injunctions put all the property in the district at his mercy. This was what democratic theory had brought New York to. For the change which that State made in 1846 was a perfectly wanton change. No practical object was to be gained by it. There had been an excellent Bench, adorned, as it happened, by one of the greatest judges of modern times, the illustrious Chancellor Kent. But the Convention of 1846 thought that the power of the people was insufficiently recognized while judges were named by the Governor and Council, and held office for life, so theory was obeyed. The Convention in its circular address announced, in proposing the election of judges for five years by the voters of the district, that "the happiness of the people of this State will henceforth, under God, be in their own hands." But the quest of a more perfect freedom and equality on which the Convention started the people gave them in twenty-five years Judge Barnard instead of Chancellor Kent.

The limited attainments of the Bench in many States, and its conspicuous inferiority to the counsel who practise before it are, however, less serious evils than the corruption with which it is often charged. Nothing has done so much to discredit American institutions in Europe as the belief that the fountains of justice are there generally polluted; nor is there any point on which a writer treating of the United States would more desire to be able to set forth incontrovertible facts. Unluckily, this is just what from the nature of the case cannot be done as regards some parts of the country. There is no doubt as to the purity of most States, but as to others it is extremely hard to test the rumours that are current. I give such results as many questions in many districts enable me to reach.

The Federal judges are above suspicion. I do not know that any member of the Supreme court or any Circuit judge has been ever accused of corruption; nor have the allegations occasionally made by partisans against some of the southern District Federal judges been seriously pressed.

The State judges have been and are deemed honest and impartial in nearly all the northern and most of the southern and western States. In a few of these States, such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, the Bench has within the present generation included men who would do credit to any court in any country. Even in other States an eminent man is occasionally found, as in England there are some County Court judges who are sounder lawyers and abler men than some of the persons whom political favour has of late years been unhappily permitted to raise to the bench of the High Court.

In a few States, perhaps six or seven in all, suspicions have at one time or another within the last twenty years attached to one or more of the superior judges. Sometimes these suspicions may have been ill-founded.[1] But though I know of only one case in which they have been substantiated, there can be little doubt that in several instances improprieties have been committed. The judge may not have taken a bribe, but he has perverted justice at the instance of some person or persons who either gave him a consideration or exercised an undue influence over him. It would not follow that in such instances the whole Bench was tainted; indeed I have never heard of a State in which more than two or three judges were the objects of distrust at the same time.[2]

In one State, viz. New York, in 1869-71, there were flagrant scandals which led to the disappearance of three justices of the superior courts who had unquestionably both sold and denied justice. The Tweed Ring, when masters of New York City and engaged in plundering its treasury, found it convenient to have in the seat of justice accomplices who might check inquiry into their misdeeds. This the system of popular elections for very short terms enabled them to do; and men were accordingly placed on the Bench whom one might rather have expected to see in the dock — bar-room loafers, broken-down Tombs[1] attorneys, needy adventurers whose want of character made them absolutely dependent on their patrons. Being elected for eight years only, these fellows were obliged to purchase re-election by constant subservience to the party managers. They did not regard social censure, for they were already excluded from decent society; impeachment had no terrors for them, since the State legislature, as well as the executive machinery of the city, was in the hands of their masters. It would have been vain to expect such people, without fear of God or man before their eyes, to resist the temptations which capitalists and powerful companies could offer.

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[1] A recent Western instance shows how suspicions may arise. A person living in the capital of the State used his intimacy with the superior judges, most of whom were in the habit of occasionally dining with him, to lead litigants to believe that his influence with the Bench would procure for them favourable decisions. Considerable sums were accordingly given him to secure his good word. When the litigant obtained the decision he desired, the money given was retained. When the case went against him, the confidant of the Bench was delicately scrupulous in handing it back, saying that as his influence had failed to prevail, he could not possibly think of keeping the money. Everything was done in the most secret and confidential way, and it was not till after the death of this judicious dinner-giver that it was discovered that he had never spoken to the judges about law-suits at all, and that they had lain under a groundless suspicion of sharing the gains their friend had made.

[2] For instance, there is a western State in which a year or two ago there was one, but only one, of the superior judges whose integrity was doubted. So little secret was made of the matter, that when a very distinguished English lawyer visited the city, and was taken to see the Courts sitting, the newspapers announced the fact next day as follows:

"Lord X. in the city,
He has seen Judge Y."

To what precise point of infamy they descended I cannot attempt, among so many discordant stories and rumours, to determine. It is, however, beyond a doubt that they made orders in defiance of the plainest rules of practice; issued in rum-shops injunctions which they had not even read over; appointed notorious vagabonds receivers of valuable property;[2] turned over important cases to a friend of their own stamp, and gave whatever decision he suggested. There were members of the Bar who could obtain from these magistrates whatever order or decree they chose to ask for. A leading lawyer and man of high character said to me in 1870, "When a client brings me a suit which is before —— (naming a judge), I feel myself bound to tell him that though I will take it if he pleases, he had much better give it to So-and-So (naming a lawyer), for we all know that he owns that judge." A system of client robbery had sprung up by which each judge enriched the knot of disreputable lawyers who surrounded him; he referred cases to them, granted them monstrous allowances in the name of costs, gave them receiverships with a large percentage, and so forth; they in turn either at the time sharing the booty with him, or undertaking to do the same for him when he should have descended to the Bar and they have climbed to the Bench. Nor is there any doubt that criminals who had any claim on their party often managed to elude punishment. The police, it was said, would not arrest such an offender if they could help it; the District Attorney would avoid prosecuting; the court officials, if public opinion had forced the attorney to act, would try to pack the jury; the judge, if the jury seemed honest, would do his best to procure an acquittal; and if, in spite of police, attorney, officials, and judge, the criminal was convicted and sentenced, he might still hope that the influence of his party would procure a pardon from the governor of the State, or enable him in some other way to slip out of the grasp of justice. For governor, judge, attorney, officials, and police were all of them party nominees; and if a man cannot count on being helped by his party at a pinch, who will be faithful to his party?

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[1] The Tombs is the name of the city prison of New York, round which lawyers of the lowest class hover in the hope of picking up defences.

[2] "In the minds of certain New York judges," said a well-known writer at that time, "the old-fashioned distinction between a receiver of property in a Court of Equity and a receiver of stolen goods at common law may be said to have been lost." The abuses of judicial authority were mostly perpetrated in the exercise of equitable jurisdiction, which is no doubt the most delicate part of a judge's work, not only because there is no jury, but because the effect of an injunction may be irremediable, whereas a decision on the main question may be reversed on appeal. In Scotland some of the local courts have a jurisdiction unlimited in amount, but no action can be taken on an interdict issued by such a court if an appeal is made with due promptness to the Court of Session.

Although these malpractices diverted a good deal of business from the courts to private arbitration, the damage to the regular course of civil justice was much less than might have been expected. The guilty judges were but three in number, and there is no reason to think that even they decided unjustly in an ordinary commercial suit between man and man, or took direct money bribes from one of the parties to such a suit. The better opinion seems to be that it was only where the influence of a political party or of some particular persons came in that injustice was perpetrated, and the truth, I believe, was spoken by another judge, an honest and worthy man, who in talking to me at the time of the most unblushing of these offenders, said, "Well, I don't much like ——; he is certainly a bad fellow, with very little delicacy of mind. He'll give you an injunction without hearing what it's about. But I don't think he takes money down from everybody." In the instance which made most noise in Europe, that of the Erie Railroad suits, there was no need to give bribes. The gang of thieves who had gained control of the line and were "watering" its stock were leagued with the political "ringsters" who ruled the city and nominated the judges; and nobody doubts that the monstrous decisions in these suits were obtained by the influence of the Tammany leaders over their judicial minions.

The fall of the Tammany Ring was swiftly followed by the impeachment or resignation of these judges, and no similar scandal has since disgraced the Empire State, though it must be confessed that some of the criminal courts of the city would be more worthily presided over if they were "taken out of politics." At present New York appoints her chief city judges for fourteen years and pays them a large salary, so she gets fairly good if not first-rate men. Unhappily the magnitude of this one judicial scandal, happening in the greatest city of the Union, and the one which Europeans hear most of, has thrown over the integrity of the American Bench a shadow which does great injustice to it as a whole.

Although judicial purity has of late years come to be deemed an indispensable accompaniment of high civilization, it is one which has been realized in very few times and countries. Hesiod complained that the kings who heard the cause between himself and his brother received gifts to decide against him. Felix expected to get money for loosing St. Paul. Among Orientals to this day an incorruptible magistrate is a rare exception.[1] In England a lord chancellor was removed for taking bribes as late as the time of George I. In Spain, Portugal, Russia, parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and, one is told, even in Italy, the judges, except perhaps those of the highest court, are not assumed by general opinion to be above suspicion. Many are trusted individually, but the office is not deemed to guarantee the honour of its occupant. Yet in all these countries the judges are appointed by the government, and hold either for life or at its pleasure,[2] whereas in America suspicion has arisen only in States where popular election prevails; that is to say, where the responsibility for a bad appointment cannot be fixed on any one person. The shortcomings of the Bench in these States do not therefore indicate unsoundness in the general tone either of the people or of the profession from whom the offenders have been taken, but are the natural result of a system which, so far from taking precautions to place worthy persons on the seat of justice, has left the choice of them in four cases out of five to a secret combination of wirepullers. Thus we may note with satisfaction that the present tendency is not only to make judges more independent by lengthening their term of office but to withdraw their appointment from popular vote and restore it to the governor, from whom, as a responsible officer, the public may exact the utmost care in the selection of able and upright men.

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[1] In Egypt, for instance, one is told that there may be here and there among the native judges a man who does not take bribes, but probably not more than two or three in the whole country.

[2] There is the important difference between these countries and England that in all of them not only is little or no use made of the civil jury, but public opinion is less active and justice more localized, *i.e.* a smaller proportion of important suits are brought before the supreme courts of the capital. The centralization of English justice, costly to suitors, has contributed to make law more pure as well as more scientific.

CHAPTER XCIX

RAILROADS

No one will expect to find in a book like this a description of that prodigy of labour, wealth, and skill—the American railway system. Of its management, its finance, its commercial prospects, I do not attempt to speak. But railroads, and those who own and control them, occupy a place in the political and social life of the country which requires some passing words, for it is a place far more significant than similar enterprises have obtained in the Old World.

The United States are so much larger, and have a population so much more scattered than any European state that they depend even more upon means of internal communication. It is these communications that hold the country together, and render it one for all social and political purposes as well as for commerce. They may indeed be said to have made the West, for it is along the lines of railway that the West has been settled, and population still follows the rails, stretching out to south and north of the great trunk lines wherever they send off a branch. The Americans are an eminently locomotive people. Were statistics on such a point attainable, they would probably show that the average man travels over thrice as many miles by steam in a year as the average Englishman, six times as many as the average Frenchman or German. The New Yorker thinks of a journey to Chicago (900 miles) as a Londoner of a journey to Glasgow (400 miles); and a family at St. Louis will go for sea-bathing to Cape May, a journey of thirty-five or forty hours, as readily as a Birmingham family goes to Scarborough. The movements of goods traffic are on a gigantic scale. The greatest branch of heavy freight transportation in England, that of coal from the north and west to London, is not to be compared to the weight of cotton, grain, bacon, cattle, fruit, and ores which comes from the inland regions to the Atlantic coast. This traffic does not merely give to the trunk lines an enormous yearly turnover,—it interests all classes, I might almost say all individuals, in railway operations, seeing that every branch of industry and every profession except divinity and medicine is more or less directly connected with the movements of commerce, and prospers in proportion to its prosperity. Consequently, railroads and their receipts, railroad directors and their doings, occupy men's tongues and pens to a far greater extent than in Europe.

Some of the great railway companies possess yet another source of wealth and power. At the time when they were formed the enterprise of laying down rails in thinly-peopled, or perhaps quite uninhabited regions, in some instances over deserts or across lofty mountains, seemed likely to prove so unremunerative to the first shareholders, yet so beneficial to the country at large, that Congress was induced to encourage the promoters by vast grants of unoccupied land, the property of the United States, lying along the projected line.[1] The grants were often improvident, and they gave rise to endless lobbying and intrigue, first to secure them, then to keep them from being declared forfeited in respect of some breach of the conditions imposed by Congress on the company. However, the lines were made, colonists came, much of the lands has been sold, to speculators as well as to individual settlers; but much still remains in the hands of two or three companies. These gifts made the railroads great landowners, gave them a local influence and divers local interests besides those arising from their proper business of carriers, and brought them into intimate and often perilously delicate relations with leading politicians.

No wonder, then, that the railroads, even those that held no land beyond that on which their rails ran, acquired immense power in the districts they traversed. In a new and thinly-peopled State the companies were by far the wealthiest bodies, and able by their wealth to exert all sorts of influence. A city or a district of country might depend entirely upon them for its progress. If they ran a line into it or through it, emigrants followed, the value of fixed property rose, trade became brisk: if they passed it by, and bestowed transportation facilities on some other district, it saw itself outstripped and began to languish. If a company owned a trunk line it could, by raising or lowering the rates of freight on that line through which the products of the district or State passed towards the sea, stimulate or retard the prosperity of the agricultural population, or the miners, or the lumbermen. That is to say, the great companies held in their hands the fortunes of cities, of counties, even sometimes of States and Territories.[1] California was for many years practically at the mercy of the Central Pacific Railway, then her only road to the Mississippi Valley and the Atlantic. Oregon and Washington were almost equally dependent upon the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company, and afterwards upon the Northern Pacific. What made the position more singular was that, although these railroads had been built under statutes passed by the State they traversed (or, in the case of Territories, wholly or partially under Federal statutes), they were built with Eastern capital, and were owned by a number, often a small number, of rich men living in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, unamenable to local influences, and caring no more about the wishes and feelings of the State whence their profits came than an English bondholder cares about the feelings of Chili. Moreover, although the railroads held a fuller sway in the newer States, they were sometimes potent political factors in the older ones. In 1870 I often heard men say, "Camden and Amboy (the Camden and Amboy Railroad) rules New Jersey." In New York the great New York Central Railroad, in Pennsylvania the Pennsylvania Railroad under its able chief, exerted immense influence with the legislature, partly by their wealth, partly by the opportunities of bestowing favours on individuals and localities which they possessed, including the gift of free passes and possibly influence exercised on the votes of their employés.

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[1] These grants usually consisted of alternate sections, in the earlier cases of five to the mile along the line. The total grant made to the Union Pacific Railway was 13,000,100 acres; to the Kansas Pacific, 6,000,000; to the Central Pacific, 12,100,100; to the Northern Pacific, 47,000,000; to the Atlantic and Pacific, 42,000,000; to the Southern Pacific 9,520,000. Enormous money subsidies, exceeding $60,000,000, were also granted by Congress to the first transcontinental lines.

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[1] This was of course especially the case with the newer western States; yet even in the older parts of the country any very large railway system had great power, for it might have a monopoly of communication; or if there were two lines they might have agreed to "pool," as it is called, their traffic receipts and work in harmony.

Sometimes, at least in Pennsylvania and New York, they even threw their weight into the scale of a political party, giving it money as well as votes. But more commonly they have confined themselves to securing their own interests, and obliged, or threatened and used, the State leaders of both parties alike for that purpose. The same sort of power was at one time exerted over some of the cantons of Switzerland by the greater Swiss railway companies; though, since the Constitution of 1874, it is said to have quite disappeared.[1]

In such circumstances conflicts between the railroads and the State governments were inevitable. The companies might succeed in "capturing" individual legislators or committees of either or both Houses, but they could not silence the discontented cities or counties who complained of the way in which they were neglected while some other city obtained better facilities, still less the farmers who denounced the unduly high rates they were forced to pay for the carriage of their produce. Thus a duel began between the companies and the peoples of some of the States, which has gone on with varying fortune in the halls of the legislatures and in the courts of law. The farmers of the North-west formed agricultural associations called "Patrons of Husbandry," or popularly "Granges," and passed a number of laws imposing various restrictions on the railroads, and providing for the fixing of a maximum scale of charges. But although the railroad companies had been formed under, and derived their powers of taking land and making bye-laws from, State statutes, these statutes had in some cases omitted to reserve the right to deal freely with the lines by subsequent legislation; and the companies therefore attempted to resist the Granger laws as being unconstitutional. They were defeated by two famous decisions of the Supreme Federal court in 1876,[2] establishing the right of a State to impose restrictions on public undertakings in the nature of monopolies. But in other directions they had better luck. The Granger laws proved in many respects unworkable. The companies, alleging that they could not carry goods at a loss, refused to construct branches and other new lines, to the great disappointment of the people, and in various ways contrived to make the laws difficult of execution.

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[1] The Swiss railways are now under the control of the Federal Government.

[2] See *Munn* v. *Illinois*, and *Peake* v. *Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad*, 94 U.S. Reports.

Thus they procured (in most States) the repeal of the first set of Granger laws; and when further legislation was projected, secret engines of influence were made to play upon the legislatures, influences which, since the first wave of popular impulse had now spent itself, often proved efficacious in averting further restrictions or impeding the enforcement of those imposed. Those who profited most by the strife were the less scrupulous among the legislators, who, if they did not receive some favour from a railroad, could levy blackmail upon it by bringing in a threatening bill.[1]

The contest, however, was not confined to the several States. It passed to Congress. Congress has no authority under the Constitution to deal with a railway lying entirely within one State, but is held entitled to legislate, under its power of regulating commerce between different States, for all lines (including connecting lines which are worked together as a through line) which traverse more than one State. And of course it has always had power over railways situate in the Territories. As the Federal courts decided a few years ago that no State could legislate against a railway lying partly outside its own limits, because this would trench on Federal competence, the need for Federal legislation, long pressed upon Congress, became urgent; and after much debate an Act was passed in 1887 establishing an Inter-State Commerce Commission, with power to regulate railroad transportation and charges in many material respects. The companies had opposed it; but now that it has passed they have discovered that it hurts them less than they had feared, and in some points even benefits them; for having prohibited all discriminations and secret rebates, and required them to adhere to their published list of charges, it has given them a ready answer to demands for exceptional privileges.[2] Too little time has, however, yet elapsed for the result of this momentous statute to be duly estimated. That the railroads had exercised autocratic and irresponsible power over some regions of the country, and had occasionally abused this power, especially by imposing discriminations in their freight charges, is not to be denied.[1] They had become extremely unpopular, a constant theme for demagogic denunciations; and their success during some years in resisting public clamour by their secret control of legislatures, or even of the State commissioners appointed to deal with them, increased the irritation. All corporations are at present unpopular in America, and especially corporations possessed of monopolies. The agitation may possibly continue, though the confidence felt in the Commission has done something to allay it, and attempts be made to carry still more stringent legislation. There is even a section of opinion which desires to see all railways, as well as telegraphs, in the hands of the nation, and that not merely for revenue purposes, but to make them serve more perfectly the public convenience. The objection which to most men seems decisive against any such arrangement is that it would throw a stupendous mass of patronage and power into the hands of the party for the time being holding office. Considering what a perennial spring of bitterness partisan patronage has been, and how liable to perversion under the best regulations patronage must always be, he would be a bold man who would toss hundreds of thousands of places, many of them important and highly paid, into the lap of a party minister. Economic gain, assuming that such gain could be secured, would be dearly bought by political danger.

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[1] Very recently the legislature of Iowa passed a statute giving the State Railway Commission full powers to fix charges; and injunctions were obtained from the Courts restraining the Commission from imposing, as they were proceeding to do, rates so low as to be destructive of reasonable profits.

[2] It has also attempted, though as yet with incomplete success, to put an end to the bestowal of free passes for passengers, a form of preference which had assumed large proportions.

Their strife with the State governments has not been enough to occupy the pugnacity of the companies. They must needs fight with one another; and their wars have been long and fierce, involving immense pecuniary interests, not only to the shareholders in the combatant lines, but also to the inhabitants of the districts which they served. Such conflicts have been most frequent between the trunk lines competing for the carriage of goods from the West to the Atlantic cities, and have been conducted not only by lowering charges so as to starve out the weaker line,[2] but by attacks upon its stocks in the great share markets, by efforts to defeat its bills in the State legislatures, and by law-suits with applications for injunctions in the courts. Sometimes, as in the famous case of the struggle of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fé railway with the Denver and Rio Grande for the possession of the great cañon of the Arkansas river,[1] the easiest route into an important group of Rocky Mountain valleys, the navvies of the two companies fought with shovels and pick-axes on the spot, while their counsel were fighting in the law courts sixteen hundred miles away. A well-established company has sometimes to apprehend a peculiarly annoying form of attack at the hands of audacious adventurers, who construct a competing line where the traffic is only sufficient to enable the existing one to pay a dividend on the capital it has expended, aiming, not at the creation of a profitable undertaking, but at levying blackmail on one which exists, and obtaining an opportunity of manipulating bonds and stocks for their own benefit. In such a case the railway company in possession has its choice between two courses: it may allow the new enterprise to go on, then lower its own rates, and so destroy all possibility of profits; or it may buy up the rival line, perhaps at a heavy price. Sometimes it tries the first course long enough to beat down the already small prospects of the new line and then buys it; but although this may ruin the "pirates" (as they are commonly called) who have built the new line, it involves a hideous waste of the money spent in construction, and the shareholders of the old company as well as the bondholders of the new one suffer. This is a form of raid upon property which evidently ought to be prevented by a greater care on the part of State legislatures in refusing to pass special Acts for unnecessary railroads, or in so modifying their law as to prevent a group of promoters from using for purposes of blackmail the powers of taking land and constructing railroads which general statutes confer.

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[1] I am informed by a high authority that the freight charges as well as passenger charges on American railways were, before 1887, generally lower than those in England and in Western Europe generally.

[2] In one of these contests, one railway having lowered its rates for cattle to a figure below paying point, the manager of the other promptly bought up all the cattle he could find at the inland terminus, and sent them to the coast by the enemy's line, a costly lesson to the latter.

This atmosphere of strife has had something to do with the feature of railway management which a European finds most remarkable; I mean its autocratic character. Nearly all the great lines are controlled and managed either by a small knot of persons or by a single man. Sometimes one man, or a knot of three or four capitalists acting as one man, holds an actual majority of the shares, and then he can of course do exactly what he pleases. Sometimes the interest of the ruling man (or knot) comes so near to being a controlling interest that he may safely assume that no majority can be brought against him, the tendencies of many shareholders being to support "the administration" in all its policy. This accumulation of voting power in a few hands seems to be due partly to the fact that the shares of new lines do not, in the first instance, get scattered through the general public as in England, but are commonly allotted in masses to a few persons, often as a sort of bonus upon their subscribing for the bonds of the company.[1] In the United States shares do not usually represent a cash subscription, the practice being to construct a railway with the proceeds of the bonds and to regard the shares as the materials for future profit, things which may, if the line be of a speculative character, be run up in price and sold off by the promoters; or, if it be likely to prosper, be held by them for the purpose of controlling as well as gaining profits from the undertaking.[2] It is partly also to be ascribed to the splendid boldness with which financial operations are conducted in America, where the leaders of Wall Street do not hesitate to buy up enormous masses of shares or stock for the purpose of some *coup.* Having once got into a single hand, or a few hands, these stock masses stay there, and give their possessors the control of the line. But the power of the railways, and the position they hold towards local governments, State legislatures, and one another, have also a great deal to do with the phenomenon. War is the natural state of an American railway towards all other authorities and its own fellows, just as war was the natural state of cities towards one another in the ancient world. And as an army in the field must be commanded by one general, so must this latest militant product of an eminently peaceful civilization. The president of a great railroad needs gifts for strategical combinations scarcely inferior to those, if not of a great general, yet of a great war minister—a Chatham or a Carnot. If his line extends into a new country, he must be quick to seize the best routes,—the best physically, because they will be cheaper to operate, the best in agricultural or mineral resources, because they will offer a greater prospect of traffic. He must so throw out his branches as not only to occupy promising tracts, but keep his competing enemies at a distance; he must annex small lines when he sees a good chance, damaging them first so as to get them cheaper; he must make a close alliance with at least one other great line, which completes his communications with the East or with the farther West, and be prepared to join this ally in a conflict with some threatening competitor. He must know the Governors and watch the legislatures of the States or Territories through which his line runs; must have adroit agents at the State capitals, well supplied with the sinews of war, ready to "see" leading legislators and to defeat any legislative attacks that may be made by blackmailers or the tools of rival presidents. And all the while he must not only keep his eye upon the markets of New York, prepared for the onslaught which may be made upon his own stock by some other railroad or by speculators desiring to make a profit as "bears," and maintaining friendly relations with the capitalists whose help he will need when he brings out a new loan, but must supervise the whole administrative system of the railroad — its stations, permanent way, locomotives, rolling stock, engineering shops, freight and passenger rates, perhaps also the sale of its land grants and their defence against the cabals of Washington. No talents of the practical order can be too high for such a position as this; and even the highest talents would fail to fill it properly except with a free hand. Concentration of power and an almost uncontrolled discretion are needed; and in America whatever commercial success needs is sure to be yielded. Hence, when a group of capitalists own a railway, they commit its management to a very small committee among themselves, or even to a single man; and when the shares are more widely distributed, the shareholders, recognizing the necessary conditions of prosperity, not to say of survival in the struggle for existence, leave themselves in the hands of the president, who has little to fear except from the shares being quietly bought up by some syndicate of enemies seeking to dethrone him.

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[1] This so-called "Royal Gorge" of the Arkansas is one of the most striking pieces of scenery on the North American continent, not unlike the grandest part of the famous Dariel Pass in the Caucasus.

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[1] "It is an extraordinary fact," says Mr. Hitchcock, "that the power of eminent domain which the State itself confessedly ought never to use save on grounds of public necessity should be at the command of irresponsible individuals for purposes of private gain, not only without any guarantee that the public interest will be promoted thereby, but when it is perfectly well known that it may be, and has been deliberately availed of for merely speculative purposes. The facility with which, under loosely drawn railroad laws, purely speculative railroad charters can be obtained has contributed not a little to develop the law of receiverships. In Missouri there is nothing to prevent any five men whose combined capital would not enable them to build five miles of track on a level prairie from forming a railroad corporation with power to construct a road five hundred miles long, and to condemn private property for that purpose, for a line whose construction no public interest demands, and from which no experienced man could expect dividends to accrue."—Address to the American Bar Association, 1887.

[2] The great Central Pacific Railway was constructed by four men, two of whom were when they began storekeepers in a small way in San Francisco, and none of whom could be called capitalists. Their united funds when they began in 1860 were only $120,000 (£24,000). They went on issuing bonds and building the line bit by bit as the bonds put them in funds, retaining the control of the company through the shares. This Central Pacific Company ultimately built the Southern Pacific and numerous branches, and became by far the greatest power in the West, owning nearly all the railways in California and Nevada. When one of the four died in 1878, his estate was worth $30,000,000 (£6,000,000).

Of these great railway chieftains, some have come to the top gradually, by the display in subordinate posts of brilliant administrative gifts. Some have begun as financiers, and have sprung into the presidential saddle at a bound by forming a combination which has captured the railway by buying up its stock. Occasionally a great capitalist will seize a railroad only for the sake of manipulating its stock, clearing a profit, and throwing it away. But more frequently, when a really important line has passed into the hands of a man or group, it is held fast and developed into a higher efficiency by means of the capital they command.

These railway kings are among the greatest men, perhaps I may say are the greatest men, in America. They have wealth, else they could not hold the position. They have fame, for every one has heard of their achievements; every newspaper chronicles their movements. They have power, more power—that is, more opportunity of making their personal will prevail—than perhaps any one in political life, except the President and the Speaker, who after all hold theirs only for four years and two years, while the railroad monarch may keep his for life. When the master of one of the greatest Western lines travels towards the Pacific on his palace car, his journey is like a royal progress. Governors of States and Territories bow before him; legislatures receive him in solemn session; cities and towns seek to propitiate him, for has he not the means of making or marring a city's fortunes? Although the railroad companies are unpopular, and although this autocratic sway from a distance contributes to their unpopularity, I do not think that the ruling magnates are themselves generally disliked. On the contrary, they receive that tribute of admiration which the American gladly pays to whoever has done best what every one desires to do. Probably no career draws to it or unfolds and develops so much of the characteristic ability of the nation; and I doubt whether any congressional legislation will greatly reduce the commanding positions which these potentates hold as the masters of enterprises whose wealth, geographical extension, and influence upon the growth of the country and the fortunes of individuals, find no parallel in the Old World.

It may be thought that some of the phenomena I have described belong to an era of colonization, and that when the West has been filled up, and all the arterial railways made, when, in fact, the United States have become even as England or France, the power of railroads and their presidents will decline. No doubt there will be less room for certain bold ventures and feats of constructive strategy; and as the network of railways grows closer, States and districts may come to depend less upon one particular company. At the same time it must be remembered that the more populous and wealthy the country, so much the larger the business of a trunk line, and the number of its branches and its employés; while the consolidation of small lines, or their absorption by large ones, is a process evidently destined to continue. It may therefore be conjectured that the railroad will long stand forth as a great and perplexing force in the economico-political life of the United States. It cannot be left to itself—the most extreme advocate of *laissez faire* would not contend for that, for to leave it to itself would be to make it a tyrant. It cannot be absorbed and worked by the National government;—only the most sanguine state socialist would propose to impose so terrible a strain on the virtue of American politicians, and so seriously to disturb the constitutional balance between the States and the Federal authority. Many experiments may be needed before the true mean course between these extremes is discovered. Meanwhile, the railroads illustrate two tendencies specially conspicuous in America,—the power of the principle of association, which makes commercial corporations, skilfully handled, formidable to individual men; and the way in which the principle of monarchy, banished from the field of government, creeps back again and asserts its strength in the scarcely less momentous contests of industry and finance.

CHAPTER C

WALL STREET

No invention of modern times, not even that of negotiable paper, has so changed the face of commerce and delighted lawyers with a variety of new and intricate problems as the creation of incorporated joint-stock companies. America, though she came latest into the field, has developed these on a grander scale and with a more refined skill than the countries of the Old World. Nowhere do trading corporations play so great a part in trade and industry; nowhere are so many huge undertakings in their hands; nowhere else has the method of controlling them become a political problem of the first magnitude. So vigorous, indeed, is the inventive genius of American commerce that, not satisfied with the new applications it has found for the principles of the joint-stock corporation, it has lately attempted a further development of the arts of combination by creating those anomalous giants called Trusts, groups of individuals and corporations concerned in one branch of trade or manufacture, which are placed under the irresponsible management of a small knot of persons, who, through their command of all the main producing or distributing agencies, intend and expect to dominate the market, force manufacturers or dealers to submit, and hold the consumer at their mercy.[1]

Here, however, I am concerned with the amazing expansion of joint-stock companies in America, only as the cause of the not less amazing activity in buying and selling shares which the people display. This is almost the first thing that strikes a European visitor, and the longer he remains the more deeply is he impressed by it as something to which his own country, be it England, France, or Germany, furnishes no parallel. In Europe, speculation in bonds, shares, and stocks is confined to a section of the commercial world, with a few stragglers from other walks of business, or from the professions, who flutter near the flame and burn their wings. Ordinary steady-going people, even people in business, know little or nothing about the matter, and seldom think of reading the share lists. When they have savings to invest they do as they are bidden by their banker or stockbroker, if indeed they have a stockbroker, and do not get their banker to engage one.[1] In the United States a much larger part of the population, including professional men as well as business men, seem conversant with the subject, and there are times when the whole community, not merely city people but also storekeepers in country towns, even farmers, even domestic servants, interest themselves actively in share speculations. At such times they watch the fluctuations of price in the stocks of the great railroads, telegraph companies (or rather the Telegraph Company, since there is practically but one), and other leading undertakings; they discuss the prospects of a rise or fall, and the probable policy of the great operators; they buy and sell bonds or stocks on a scale not always commensurate with their own means.[2] In the great cities the number of persons exclusively devoted to this occupation is very large, and naturally so, because, while the undertakings lie all over a vast extent of country, the capital which owns them is mostly situate in the cities, and, indeed, six-sevenths of it (so far as it is held in America) in four or five of the greatest Eastern cities. It is chiefly in railroads that these Easterns speculate. But in the Far West mines are an even more exciting and pervasive interest. In San Francisco every one gambles in mining stocks, even the nursemaids and the Chinese. The share lists showing the oscillations of prices are hung up outside the newspaper offices, and fixed on posts in the streets, and are changed every hour or two during the day. In the silver districts of Colorado and New Mexico the same kind of thing goes on.[1] It is naturally in such spots that the fire burns hottest. But go where you will in the Union, except, to be sure, in the more stagnant and impecunious parts of the South, you feel bonds, stocks, and shares in the atmosphere all round you. *Te veniente die*—they begin the day with the newspaper at breakfast: they end it with the chat over the nocturnal cigar.[2]

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[1] The question what is the legal status (if any) of these Trusts, a creation of the last few years, is being actively discussed by American jurists at this moment. The dangerous extent of the power they have begun to exert is generally recognized.

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[1] There are, of course, simple folk in England who take shares on the faith of prospectuses of new companies sent to them; but the fact that it pays to send such prospectuses is the best proof of the general ignorance, in such matters, of laymen (including the clergy) and women in that country.

[2] In some of the country towns there are small offices, commonly called "bucket shops," to which farmers and tradesmen resort to effect their purchases and sales in the great stock markets of New York. Not a few ruin themselves. Some States have endeavoured to extinguish them by penal legislation. See p. 435 *ante*.

This eager interest centres itself in New York, for finance, more perhaps than any other kind of business, draws to few points, and New York, which has as little claim to be the social or intellectual as to be the political capital of the country, is emphatically its financial capital. And as the centre of America is New York, so the centre of New York is Wall Street. This famous thoroughfare is hardly a quarter of a mile long, a little longer than Lombard Street in London. It contains the Sub-Treasury of the United States and the Stock Exchange. In it and the three or four streets that open into it are situated the Produce Exchange, the offices of the great railways, and the places of business of the financiers and stockbrokers, together representing an accumulation of capital and intellect comparable to the capital and intellect of London, and destined before many years to surpass every similar spot in either hemisphere.[3] Wall Street is the great nerve centre of all American business; for finance and transportation, the two determining powers in business, have here their headquarters. It is also the financial barometer of the country, which every man engaged in large affairs must constantly consult, and whose only fault is that it is too sensitive to slight and transient variations of pressure.

The share market of New York, or rather of the whole Union, in "the Street," as it is fondly named, is the most remarkable sight in the country after Niagara and the Yellowstone Geysers. It is not unlike those geysers in the violence of its explosions, and in the rapid rise and equally rapid subsidence of its active paroxysms. And as the sparkling column of the geyser is girt about and often half concealed by volumes of steam, so are the rise and fall of stocks mostly surrounded by mists and clouds of rumour, some purposely created, some self-generated in the atmosphere of excitement, curiosity, credulity, and suspicion which the denizens of Wall Street breathe. Opinions change from moment to moment; hope and fear are equally vehement and equally irrational; men are constant only in inconstancy, superstitious because they are sceptical, distrustful of patent probabilities, and therefore ready to trust their own fancies or some unfathered tale. As the eagerness and passion of New York leave European stock markets far behind, for what the Paris and London exchanges are at rare moments Wall Street is for weeks, or perhaps, with a few intermissions, for months together, so the operations of Wall Street are vaster, more boldly conceived, executed with a steadier precision, than those of European speculators. It is not only their bearing on the prosperity of railroads or other great undertakings that is eagerly watched all over the country, but also their personal and dramatic aspects. The various careers and characters of the leading operators are familiar to every one who reads a newspaper; his schemes and exploits are followed as Europe followed the fortunes of Prince Alexander of Battenberg or General Boulanger. A great "corner," for instance, is one of the exciting events of the year, not merely to those concerned with the stock or species of produce in which it is attempted, but to the public at large.

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[1] In a mining town in Colorado the landlady of an inn in which I stayed for a night pressed me to bring out in London a company to work a mining claim which she had acquired, offering me what is called an option. I inquired how much money it would take to begin to work the claim and get out the ore. "Less than thirty thousand dollars" (£6000). (The carbonates are in that part of Colorado very near the surface.) "And what is to be the capital of your company?" "Five millions of dollars" (£1,000,000)!

[2] Of course I am speaking of the ordinary man you meet in travelling, who is a sample of the ordinary citizen. In polite society one's entertainer would no more bring up such a subject, unless you drew him on to do so, than he would think of talking politics.

[3] The balances settled in the New York Clearing House each day are two-thirds of all the clearings in the United States.

How far is this state of things transitory, due to temporary causes arising out of the swift material development of the United States? During the Civil War the creation of a paper currency, which rapidly depreciated, produced a wild speculation in gold, lasting for several years, whose slightest fluctuations were followed with keen interest, because in indicating the value of the paper currency they indicated the credit of the nation, and the view taken by the financial community of the prospects of the war. The re-establishment of peace brought with it a burst of industrial activity, specially directed to the making of new railroads and general opening up of the West. Thus the eyes that had been accustomed to watch Wall Street did not cease to watch it, for these new enterprises involved many fortunes, had drawn much capital from small investors, and were really of great consequence—the transcontinental railways most of all—to the welfare of the country. It is some time since the work of railway construction began to slacken, as it slackened in England a generation ago, although from time to time there is a revival. Mines are less profitable since the great fall in silver; the price of United States bonds fluctuates hardly (if at all) more than consols do in England. The last four or five years have been comparatively quiet, yet even when transactions are fewer, the interest of the public in the stock markets does not greatly diminish. Trade and manufactures cover the whole horizon of American life far more than they do anywhere in Europe. They —I include agriculture, because it has been, in America, commercialized, and become really a branch of trade—are the main concern of the country, to which all others are subordinate. So large a part of the whole capital employed is in the hands of joint-stock companies,[1] so easy a method do these companies furnish by which the smallest investor may take part in commercial ventures and increase his pile, so general is the diffusion of information (of course often incorrect) regarding their state and prospects, so vehement and pervading is the passion for wealth, so seductive are the examples of a few men who have realized stupendous fortunes by clever or merely lucky hits when there came a sharp rise or fall in the stock market, so vast, and therefore so impressive to the imagination, is the scale on which these oscillations take place,[2] that the universal attention given to stocks and shares, and the tendency to speculation among the non-financial classes which reveals itself from time to time, seem amply accounted for by permanent causes, and therefore likely to prove normal. Even admitting that neither such stimulations as were present during the war period nor those that belonged to the era of inflated prosperity which followed are likely to recur, it must be observed that habits formed under transitory conditions do not always pass away with those conditions, but may become a permanent and, so to speak, hereditary element in national life.

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[1] The wealth of corporations has been estimated by high authorities at one-fourth of the total value of all property in the United States. I find that in the State of Illinois alone (population in 1880, 3,077,000) there were formed during the year 1886, under the general law, 1714 incorporated companies, with an aggregate capital stock (authorized) of $819,101,110. Of these 632 were manufacturing companies, 104 mining companies, 41 railroad companies.

[2] The great rebound of trade in 1879-83 trebled within those years the value of many railroad bonds and stocks, and raised at a still more rapid rate the value of lands in many parts of the West.

So far as politics are concerned, I do not know that Wall Street does any harm. There is hardly any speculation in foreign securities, because capital finds ample employment in domestic undertakings; and the United States are so little likely to be involved in foreign complications that neither the action of European powers nor that of the Federal government bears directly enough upon the stock markets to bring politics into stocks or stocks into politics.[1] Hence one source of evil which poisons public life in Europe, and is believed to have proved specially pernicious in France—the influence of financial speculators or holders of foreign bonds upon the foreign policy of a government—is wholly absent. An American Secretary of State, supposing him base enough to use his official knowledge for stock-jobbing operations, would have little advantage over the meanest broker in Wall Street.[2] Even as regards domestic politics, the division of power between Congress and the State legislatures reduces the power of the former over industrial undertakings, and leaves comparatively few occasions on which the action of the Federal government tends to affect the market for most kinds of stocks, though of course changes in the public debt and in the currency affect by sympathy every part of the machinery of commerce. The shares of railroad companies owning land grants were, and to some slight extent still are, depressed and raised by the greater or slighter prospects of legislative interference; but it may be expected that this point of contact between speculators and politicians, which, like the meeting-point of currents in the sea, is marked by a good deal of rough and turbid water, will soon cease to exist, as the remaining railroad lands get sold or are declared forfeited.

The more serious question remains: How does Wall Street tell on the character of the people? They are naturally inclined to be speculative. The pursuit of wealth is nowhere so eager as in America, the opportunities for acquiring it are nowhere so numerous. Nowhere is one equally impressed by the progress which the science and arts of gain—I do not mean the arts that add to the world's wealth, but those by which individuals appropriate an exceptionally large share of it—make from year to year. The materials with which the investor or the speculator has to work may receive no sensible addition; but the constant application of thousands of keen intellects, spurred by sharp desire, evolves new combinations out of these old materials, devises new methods and contrivances apt for a bold and skilful hand, just as electricians go on perfecting the machinery of the telegraph, just as the accumulated labours of scholars present us with always more trustworthy texts of the classical writers and more precise rules of Greek and Latin syntax. Under these new methods of business, speculation, though it seems to become more of a science, does not become less speculative. People seem to buy and sell on even slighter indications than in Paris or London. The processes of "bulling" and "bearing" are more constant and more skilfully applied. The whole theory and practice of "margins" has been more completely worked out. However, it is of less consequence for our present purpose to dwell on the proficiency of the professional operator than to note the prevalence of the habit of speculation: it is not intensity so much as extension that affects an estimate of the people at large.

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[1] Of course the prospects of war or peace in Europe do sensibly affect the American produce markets, and therefore the railroads, and indeed all great commercial undertakings. But these prospects are as much outside the province of the American statesman as the drought which affects the coming crop or the blizzard that stops the earnings of a railway.

[2] The Secretary of the Treasury, by his control of the public debt, has no doubt means of affecting the markets; but I have never heard any charge of improper conduct in such matters on the part of any one connected with the Treasury Department.

Except in New York, and perhaps in Chicago, which is more and more coming to reproduce and rival the characteristics of New York, Americans bet less upon horse-races than the English do. Horse-races are, indeed, far less common, though there is a good deal of fuss made about trotting-matches. However, much money changes hands, especially in Eastern cities, over yacht-races, and plenty everywhere over elections.[1] The purchase and sale of "produce futures," *i.e.* of cotton, wheat, maize, bacon, lard, and other staples not yet in existence but to be delivered at some distant day, has reached an enormous development.[2] There is, even in the Eastern cities, where the value of land might be thought to have become stable, a real estate market in which land and houses are dealt in as matter for pure speculation, with no intention of holding except for a rise within the next few hours or days; while in the new West the price of lands, especially near cities, undergoes fluctuations greater than those of the most unstable stocks in the London market. It can hardly be doubted that the pre-existing tendency to encounter risks and "back one's opinion," inborn in the Americans, and fostered by the circumstances of their country, is further stimulated by the existence of so vast a number of joint-stock enterprises, and by the facilities they offer to the smallest capitalists. Similar facilities exist in the Old World; but few of the inhabitants of the Old World have yet learned how to use and abuse them. The Americans, quick at everything, have learned long ago. The habit of speculation is now a part of their character, and it increases that constitutional excitability and high nervous tension of which they are proud.

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[1] The mischief has been thought sufficient to be specially checked by the constitutions or statutes of some States.

[2] It is stated that the Cotton Exchange sells in each year five times the value of the cotton crop, and that in 1887 the Petroleum Exchange sold fifty times the amount of that year's yield.

I have referred in a note to a preceding chapter to some recent attempts to check by legislation this form of speculation (p. 435 *ante*).

Some may think that when the country fills up and settles down, and finds itself altogether under conditions more nearly resembling those of the Old World, these peculiarities will fade away. I doubt it. They seem to have already passed into the national fibre.

CHAPTER CI

THE UNIVERSITIES

AMONG the universities of America there is none which has sprung up of itself like Bologna or Paris or El Azhar or Oxford, none founded by an Emperor like Prague, or by a Pope like Glasgow. All have been the creatures of private munificence or denominational zeal or State action. Their history is short indeed compared with that of the universities of Europe. Yet it is full of interest, for it shows a steady growth, it records many experiments, it gives valuable data for comparing the educational results of diverse systems.

When the first English colonists went to America, the large and liberal mediæval conception of a university, as a place where graduates might teach freely and students live freely, was waxing feeble in Oxford and Cambridge. The instruction was given chiefly by the colleges, which had already become, what they long continued, organisms so strong as collectively to eclipse the university they had been meant to aid. Accordingly when places of superior instruction began to grow up in the colonies, it was on the model not of an English university but of an English college that they were created. The glory of founding the first place of learning in the English parts of America belongs to a Puritan minister and graduate of Cambridge, John Harvard of Emmanuel College,[1] who, dying in 1638, eighteen years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, gave half his property for the establishment of a college in the town of Cambridge, three miles from Boston, which, originally organized on the plan of Emmanuel College, and at once taken under the protection of the infant commonwealth of Massachusetts, has now grown into the most famous university on the North American continent.[1]

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[1] Emmanuel was a college then much frequented by the Puritans. Of the English graduates who emigrated to New England between 1620 and 1647, nearly one hundred in number, three-fourths came from the University of Cambridge.

The second foundation was due to the Colonial Assembly of Virginia. So early as 1619, twelve years after the first settlement at Jamestown, the Virginia Company in England voted ten thousand acres of land in the colony for the establishment of a seminary of learning, and a site was in 1624 actually set apart, on an island in the Susquehanna River, for the "Foundinge and Maintenance of a University and such schools in Virginia as shall there be erected, and shall be called Academia Virginiensis et Oxoniensis." This scheme was never carried out. But in 1693 the Virginians obtained a grant of land and money from the home government for the erection of a college, which received the name of the College of William and Mary.[2] The third foundation was Yale College, established in Connecticut (first at Saybrook, then at New Haven) in 1700; the fourth Princeton, in New Jersey, in 1746. None of these received the title of university: Harvard is called a "school or colledge": Yale used the name "collegiate school" for seventeen years. "We on purpose gave your academy as low a name as we could that it might the better stand the wind and weather" was the reason assigned. Other academies or colleges in New England and the Middle States followed: such as that which is now the University of Pennsylvania, in 1749; King's, now Columbia, College in New York, in 1754; and Rhode Island College (now Brown University), in 1764; and the habit of granting degrees grew up naturally and almost imperceptibly. A new departure is marked after the Revolution by the establishment, at the instance of Jefferson, of the University of Virginia, on lines bearing more resemblance to the universities of the European continent than to the then educationally narrow and socially domestic colleges of England.

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[1] In 1636 the General Court of the colony of Massachusetts Bay agreed "to give Four Hundred Pounds towards a school or college, whereof Two Hundred Pounds shall be paid the next year, and Two Hundred Pounds when the work is finished, and the next Court to appoint where and what building." In 1637 the General Court appointed a Commission of twelve "to take order for a college at Newtoun." The name Newton was presently changed to Cambridge. John Harvard's bequest being worth more than twice the £400 voted, the name of Harvard College was given to the institution; and in 1642 a statute was passed for the ordering of the same.

[2] The Virginians had worked at this project for more than thirty years before they got their charter and grant. "When William and Mary had agreed to allow £2000 out of the quit rents of Virginia towards building the college, the Rev. Mr. Blair went to Seymour, the attorney-general, with the royal command to issue a charter. Seymour demurred. The country was then engaged in war, and could ill afford to plant a college in Virginia. Mr. Blair urged that the institution was to prepare young men to become ministers of the gospel. Virginians, he said, had souls to be saved as well as their English countrymen. 'Souls!' said Seymour. 'Damn your souls! Make tobacco!'"—*The College of William and Mary*, by Dr. H. B. Adams, published by the U.S. Bureau of Education in 1887. This oldest of Southern colleges was destroyed in the Civil War (1862), and has never been restored.

At present most of the American universities are referable to one of two types, which may be described as the older and the newer, or the Private and the Public type. By the Old or Private type I denote a college on the model of a college in Oxford or Cambridge, with a head called the President, and a number of teachers, now generally called professors; a body of governors or trustees in whom the property and general control of the institution is vested; a prescribed course of instruction which all students are expected to follow; buildings, usually called dormitories, provided for the lodging of the students, and a more or less strict, but always pretty effective discipline enforced by the teaching staff. Such a college is usually of private foundation, and is almost always connected with some religious denomination.

Under the term New or Public type I include universities established, endowed, and governed by a State, usually through a body of persons called Regents. In such a university there commonly exists considerable freedom of choice among various courses of study. The students, or at least the majority of them, reside where they please in the city, and are subject to very little discipline. There are seldom or never denominational affiliations, and the instruction is often gratuitous.

There are, however, institutions which it is hard to refer to one or other type. Some of these began as private foundations, with a collegiate and quasi-domestic character, but have now developed into true universities, generally resembling those of Germany or Scotland. Harvard in Massachusetts and Yale in Connecticut are instances. Others have been founded by private persons, but as fully equipped universities, and wholly undenominational. Cornell at Ithaca in Western New York is an instance; Johns Hopkins in Baltimore is another of a different order. Some have been founded by public authority, yet have been practically left to be controlled by a body of self-renewing trustees. Columbia College in New York City is an instance. Still if we were to run through a list of the universities and colleges in the United States, we should find that the great majority were either strictly private foundations, governed by trustees, or wholly public foundations governed by the State. That is to say, the two familiar English types, viz. the University, which though a public institution is yet little interfered with by the State, which is deemed to be composed of its graduates and students, and whose self-government consists in its being governed by the graduates, and the College, which is a private corporation, consisting of a head, fellows, and scholars, and governed by the head and fellows—neither of them appear in modern America. On the other hand, the American university of the Public type differs from the universities of Germany in being placed under a State Board, not under a Minister. Neither in Germany nor in Scotland do we find anything corresponding to the American university or college of the Private type, for in neither of these countries is a university governed by a body of self-renewing trustees.[1]

It is impossible within the limits of a chapter to do more than state a few of the more salient characteristics of the American universities. I shall endeavour to present these characteristics in the fewest possible words, and for the sake of clearness shall group what I have to say under separate heads.

Statistics.—The report for 1885-86 of the United States Education Bureau gives the total number of institutions granting degrees and professing to give an instruction, higher than that of schools, in the liberal arts, at 345, with 4670 professors and 67,623 students—viz. 25,393 preparatory, 14,426 classical, 4872 scientific.[2] Many of these institutions have also professional departments, for theology, law, or medicine. But these figures are confessedly imperfect, because some institutions omit to send returns, and cannot be compelled to do so, the Federal Government having no authority in the matter. The number of degree-giving bodies, teachers, and students is therefore somewhat larger than is here stated, but how much larger it is not easy to ascertain. Besides these there are returned—

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[1] The Scotch universities (since the Act of 1858), under their University Courts, and the Victoria University in Manchester present, however, a certain resemblance to the American system, inasmuch as the governing body is in these institutions not the teaching body.

[2] Institutions for women only are not included in this list.

Schools of science	90	with	974	teachers	10,532	students.
,, theology	142	,,	803	,,	6,344	,,
,, law	49	,,	283	,,	3,054	,,
,, medicine[1] (including dentistry and pharmacy)	175	,,	2829	,,	16,407	,,

The number of degrees conferred is returned as being, in classical and scientific colleges, 7185, and in professional schools, 3296, besides 475 honorary degrees.

General character of the Universities and Colleges.—Out of this enormous total of degree-granting bodies very few answer to the modern conception of a university. If we define a university as a place where teaching of a high order, teaching which puts a man abreast of the fullest and most exact knowledge of the time, is given in a range of subjects covering all the great departments of intellectual life, not more than twelve and possibly only eight or nine of the American institutions would fall within the definition. Of these nearly all are to be found in the Atlantic States. Next below them come some thirty or forty foundations which are scarcely entitled to the name of university, some because their range of instruction is still limited to the traditional literary and scientific course such as it stood thirty years ago, others because, while professing to teach a great variety of subjects, they teach them in an imperfect way, having neither a sufficiently large staff of highly trained professors, nor an adequate provision of laboratories, libraries, and other external appliances. The older New England colleges are good types of the former group. Their instruction is sound and thorough as far as it goes, well calculated to fit a man for the professions of law or divinity, but it omits many branches of learning and science which have grown to importance within the last fifty years. There are also some Western colleges which deserve to be placed in the same category. Most of the Western State universities belong to the other group of this second class, that of institutions which aim at covering more ground than they are as yet able to cover. They have an ambitious programme; but neither the state of preparation of their students, nor the strength of the teaching staff, enables them to do justice to the promise which the programme holds out. They are true universities rather in aspiration than in fact.

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[1] Of these 175, 13 institutions (with 212 teachers and 1103 students) are homœopathic.

Below these again there is a third and much larger class of colleges, let us say three hundred, which are for most intents and purposes schools. They differ from the *gymnasia* of Germany, the *lycées* of France, the grammar schools of England and high schools of Scotland not only in the fact that they give degrees to those who have satisfactorily passed through their prescribed course or courses, but in permitting greater personal freedom to the students than boys would be allowed in those countries. They are universities or colleges as respects some of their arrangements, but schools in respect of the educational results attained. These three hundred may be further divided into two sub-classes, distinguished from one another partly by their revenues, partly by the character of the population they serve, partly by the personal gifts of the president, as the head of the establishment is usually called, and of the teachers. Some seventy or eighty, though comparatively small, are strong by the zeal and capacity of their teachers, and while not attempting to teach everything, teach the subjects which they do undertake with increasing thoroughness. The remainder would do better to renounce the privilege of granting degrees and be content to do school work according to school methods. The West and South are covered with these small colleges. In Illinois I find 25 named in the Report of the U.S. Education Bureau, in Tennessee 18, in Kentucky 12. In Ohio more than 33 are returned—and the number is probably larger—none of which deserves to be called a university. The most fully equipped would seem to be the State University at Columbus, with a faculty of 26 teachers; but of its students 141 are in the preparatory department, only 34 in the classical, and 29 in the scientific branch of the collegiate department. Oberlin, Wooster, and Marietta (all denominational) have larger totals of students, and are probably quite as efficient, but in these colleges also the majority of students are to be found in the Preparatory Department.

Revenues.—Nearly all, if not all, of the degree-granting bodies are endowed, the great majority by private founders, but a good many also by grants of land made by the State in which they stand, partly out of lands set apart for educational purposes by the Federal government. In most cases the lands have been sold and the proceeds invested. Many of the State universities of the West receive a grant from the State treasury, voted annually or biennially by the legislature. The greater universities are constantly being enriched by the gifts of private individuals, often their own graduates; but the complaint is heard that these gifts are too frequently appropriated to some specific purpose, instead of being added to the general funds of the university. Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins are now all of them wealthy foundations, and the stream of munificence swells daily.[1] Before long there will be universities in America with resources far surpassing those of any Scottish university, and approaching the collective income of the university and all the colleges in Oxford or in Cambridge. In some States the real property and funds of universities are exempt from taxation.

Government.—As already remarked, no American university or college is, so far as I know, governed either by its graduates alone, like Oxford and Cambridge, or by its teaching staff alone, like the Scotch universities before the Act of 1858. The State universities are usually controlled and managed by a board generally called the Regents, sometimes elected by the people of the State, sometimes appointed by the Governor or the legislature. There are States with an enlightened population, or in which an able president has been able to guide and influence the Regents or the legislature, in which this plan has worked excellently, securing liberal appropriations, and interesting the commonwealth in the welfare of the highest organ of its intellectual life. Such a State is Michigan. There are also States, such as California, in which the haste or unwisdom of the legislature seems for a time to have cramped the growth of the university.

All other universities and colleges are governed by boards of governors or trustees, sometimes allowed to renew themselves by co-optation, sometimes nominated by a religious denomination or other external authority.[2] The president of the institution is often, but not always, an *ex officio* member of this board, to which the management of property and financial interests belongs, while internal discipline and educational arrangements are usually left to the academic staff. A visitor from Europe is struck by the prominence of the president in an American university or college, and the almost monarchical position which he sometimes occupies towards the professors as well as towards the students. Far more authority seems to be vested in him, far more to turn upon his individual talents and character, than in the universities of Europe. Neither the German Pro-Rector, nor the Vice-Chancellor in Oxford and Cambridge, nor the Principal in a Scottish university, nor the Provost of Trinity College in Dublin, nor the head in one of the colleges in Oxford or Cambridge, is anything like so important a personage in respect of his office, whatever influence his individual gifts may give him, as an American college president.[1] In this, as in not a few other respects, America is less republican than England.

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[1] Mr. Johns Hopkins gave £700,000 to the university he founded at Baltimore. Within the last three years a magnificent endowment has been given by Mr. Leland Stanford, Senator for California, to found a new university at Palo Alto in that State.

[2] In Harvard the government is vested in a self-renewing body of seven persons called the Corporation, or technically, the President and Fellows of Harvard College, who have the charge of the property; and in a Board of Overseers, appointed formerly by the legislature, now by the graduates, five each year to serve for six years, with a general supervision of the educational system, educational details and discipline being left to the Faculty.

Of late years there have been active movements to secure the representation of the graduates of each university or college upon its governing body; and it now frequently happens that some of the trustees are elected by the alumni. Good results follow, because the alumni are disposed to elect men younger and more abreast of the times, than most of the persons whom the existing trustees co-opt.

The Teaching Staff.—The Faculty, as it is usually called, varies in numbers and efficiency according to the popularity of the university or college and its financial resources. The largest staff mentioned in the tables of the U.S. Bureau of Education is that of Harvard, with 62 professors, instructors, and lecturers in its collegiate department (excluding theology, law, and medicine); while Yale has 46, Columbia 50, Princeton 39, the University of Michigan 47, Johns Hopkins 49. Cornell returns 74, but apparently not all of these are constantly occupied in teaching.

In the colleges of the West and North-west the average number of teachers is ten in the collegiate, three in the preparatory department. It is larger in the State universities, but in some of the Southern and ruder Western States sinks to five or six, each of them taking two or three subjects. I remember to have met in the Far West a college president—I will call him Mr. Johnson—who gave me a long account of his young university, established by public authority, and receiving some small grant from the legislature. He was an active sanguine man, and in dilating on his plans frequently referred to "the Faculty" as doing this or contemplating that. At last I asked of how many professors the Faculty at present consisted. "Well," he answered, "just at present the faculty is below its full strength, but it will soon be more numerous." "And at present?" I inquired. "At present it consists of Mrs. Johnson and myself."

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[1] The President of a college was formerly usually, and in denominational colleges almost invariably, a clergyman, and generally lectured on mental and moral philosophy. (When a layman was chosen at Harvard in 1828 the clergy thought it an encroachment.) He is to-day not so likely to be in orders. However, of the 33 Ohio colleges 15 have clerical presidents. The greater universities of the East (except Yale, Princeton, and Brown), and the Western State universities are now usually ruled by laymen.

The salaries paid to professors seem small compared with the general wealth of the country and the cost of living. The highest known to me are those in Columbia College, a few of which exceed $5000 (£1000) a year. I doubt if any others reach this figure. Even in Harvard and Yale, Johns Hopkins and Cornell, most fall below $4000. Over the country generally I should guess that a president rarely receives $4000, often only $3000 or $2000, and the professors less in proportion. Under these conditions it may be found surprising that so many able men are to be found on the teaching staff of not a few colleges as well as universities, and that in the greater universities there are also many who have trained themselves by a long and expensive education in Europe for their work. The reason is to be found partly in the fondness for science and learning which has lately shown itself in America, and which makes men of intellectual tastes prefer a life of letters with poverty to success in business or at the bar, partly, as regards the smaller Western colleges, to religious motives, these colleges being largely officered by the clergy of the denomination they belong to, especially by those who love study, or find their talents better suited to the class-room than to the pulpit.

The professors seem to be always among the social aristocracy of the city in which they live, though usually unable, from the smallness of their incomes, to enjoy social life as the corresponding class does in Scotland or even in England. The position of president is often one of honour and influence: no university dignitaries in Great Britain are so well known to the public, or have their opinions quoted with so much respect, as the heads of the seven or eight leading universities of the United States.

The Students.—It is the glory of the American universities, as of those of Scotland and Germany, to be freely accessible to all classes of the people. In the Eastern States comparatively few are the sons of working men, because parents can rarely bear the expense of a university course, or dispense with a boy's earnings after he reaches thirteen. But even in the East a good many come from straitened homes, receiving assistance from some richer neighbour or from charitable funds belonging to the college at which they may present themselves. In the West, where there is little distinction of classes though great disparity of wealth, so many institutions exact a merely nominal fee, or are so ready to receive without charge a promising student, that the only difficulty in a young man's way is that of supporting himself during his college course: and this he frequently does by earning during one half the year what keeps him during the other half. Often he teaches school:—nearly all the eminent men of the last forty years, including several Presidents of the United States, have taught school in some part of their earlier careers. Sometimes he works at a trade, as many a student has done in Scotland; and, as in Scotland, he is all the more respected by his class-mates for it. The instruction which he gets in one of these Western colleges may not carry him very far, but it opens a door through which men of real power can pass into the professions, or even into the domain of learning and scientific research. In no country are the higher kinds of teaching more cheap or more accessible. There is a growing tendency for well-to-do parents to send their sons to one of the greater universities irrespective of the profession they contemplate for him, that is to say, purely for the sake of general culture, or of the social advantages which a university course is thought to confer. The usual age at which students enter one of the leading universities of the East is, as in England, from eighteen to nineteen, and the usual age of graduation twenty-two to twenty-three,[1] the regular course covering four years. In the West many students come at a more advanced age, twenty-four or twenty-five, their early education having been neglected, so the average in Western colleges is higher than in the East. In Scotland boys of fourteen and men of twenty-four used to sit side by side in university class-rooms, and compete on equal terms. The places of less note draw students from their immediate vicinity only; to those of importance boys are sent from all parts of the Union. The University of Michigan has been a sort of metropolitan university for the North-western States. Harvard and Yale, which used to draw only from the Atlantic States, now receive students from the West and even from the shores of the Pacific. A student generally completes his four years' graduation course at the same institution, but there are some who leave a small college after one year to enter at a larger one. A man who has graduated in a college which has only an Arts or collegiate department, will often, in case he designs himself for law or medicine, resort to the law or medical school of a larger university, or even, if he means to devote himself to science or philology, will pursue what is called a "post-graduate course" at some one of the greatest seats of learning. Thus it may happen, as in Germany, that a man has studied at three or four universities in succession.

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[1] President Eliot gives it for Harvard at 22 years and 7 months.

Buildings and external aspect.—Few of the buildings in any college or university are more than a century old,[1] and among these there is none of an imposing character, or with marked architectural merit. Many of the newer ones are handsome and well arranged, but I have heard it remarked that too much money is now being spent, at least in the West, upon showy buildings, possibly with the view of commanding attention. The ground plan is rarely or never that of a quadrangle as in England and Scotland, not because it was desired to avoid monastic precedents, but because detached buildings are thought to be better adapted to the cold and snows of winter. At Harvard and Yale the brick dormitories (buildings in which the students live) and class-rooms are scattered over a large space of grass planted with ancient elms, and have a very pleasing effect. But none of the universities frequented by men, unless it be the University of Wisconsin, has such an ample and agreeable pleasure-ground surrounding it as those possessed by the two oldest women's colleges, Vassar and Wellesley.

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[1] I remember one in Yale of A.D. 1753, called South Middle, which was venerated as the oldest building there.

Time spent in study.—Vacations are shorter than in England or Scotland. That of summer usually lasts from the middle of June to the middle of September, and there are generally ten days or more given at Christmas and at least a week in April. Work begins earlier in the morning than in England, but seldom so early as in Germany. Very few students seem to work as hard as the men reading for high honours do at Cambridge in England.

Local distribution of Universities and Colleges.—The number of degree-granting bodies seems to be larger in the Middle and North-western States than either in New England or in the South. In the tables of the Bureau of Education I find New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, credited with 124, more than one-third of the total for the United States; but as many are small and indifferent, the mere number does not necessarily speak of an ample and solid provision of education. Indeed Ohio and Illinois, with a population of about seven millions, have not a single institution approaching the first rank. The thirteen Southern States (excluding Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware) stand in the Tables as possessing 92, but no one of these, except the University of Virginia, attains the first rank; and the great majority are under-manned and hampered by the imperfect preparation of the students whom they receive.[1] In this respect, and as regards education generally, the South, though advancing, is still far behind the other sections of the country. There are several colleges, all or nearly all of them denominational, established for coloured people only.

System and methods of instruction.—Thirty years ago it would have been comparatively easy to describe these, for nearly all the universities and colleges prescribed a regular four years' curriculum to a student, chiefly consisting of classics and mathematics, and leading up to a B.A. degree. A youth had little or no option what he would study, for everybody was expected to take certain classes in each year, and received his degree upon having satisfactorily performed what was in each class required of him.[2] The course was not unlike that of the Scottish universities: it began with Latin, Greek, and mathematics, and wound up with logic, mental and moral philosophy, and a tincture of physics. Instruction was mainly, indeed in the small colleges wholly, catechetical. Nowadays the simple uniformity of this traditional system has vanished in the greater universities of the Eastern and Middle States, and in most of the State universities of the West. There are still regular classes, a certain number of which every student must attend, but he is allowed to choose for himself between a variety of courses or curricula, by following any one of which he may obtain a degree. The freedom of choice is greater in some universities, less in others; in some, choice is permitted from the first, in some only after two years. In Harvard this freedom seems to have reached its maximum. This so-called elective system has been and is the subject of a warm controversy, which has raged chiefly round the question whether Greek shall be a compulsory subject. The change was introduced for the sake of bringing scientific subjects into the curriculum and enabling men to specialize in them and in matters like history and Oriental or Romance philology, and was indeed a necessary concomitant to such a broadening of universities as may enable them to keep pace with the swift development of new branches of study and research during the last forty years. It is defended both on this ground and as being more likely than the old strictly limited courses to give every student something which will interest him. It is opposed as tending to bewilder him, to disperse and scatter his mind over a too wide range of subjects, perhaps unconnected with one another, to tempt him with the offer of an unchartered freedom which he wants the experience to use wisely. Several of the leading universities—Yale and Princeton, for example—and all or nearly all the smaller colleges,[1] have clung to the old system of one or two prescribed degree courses in which little variation is admitted.[2] An elective system is indeed possible only where the teaching staff is able to do justice to a wide range of subjects.

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[1] It is hoped that the recently-founded Tulane University in New Orleans will eventually make its way to the front rank. It has an endowment of about $2,000,000 (£400,000).

[2] The University of Virginia was an exception, having received from the enlightened views of Jefferson an impulse towards greater freedom.

A parallel change has passed upon the methods of teaching. Lecturing with few or no questions to the class interposed is becoming the rule in the larger universities, those especially which adopt the elective system, while what are called "recitations," that is to say, catechetical methods resembling those of Scotland or of a college (not university) lecture in Oxford twenty-five years ago, remain the rule in the more conservative majority of institutions, and are practically universal in Western colleges. Some of the Eastern universities have recently established a system of informal instruction by the professor to a small group of students on the model of the German Seminar. Private "coaching," such as prevailed largely in Oxford and still prevails in Cambridge, is almost unknown.

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[1] The small colleges are the more unwilling to drop Greek as a compulsory subject because they think that by doing so they would lose the anchor by which they hold to the higher culture, and confess themselves to be no longer universities.

[2] Yale, under the administration of its lately-appointed president, has very recently begun to allow a greater range of choice.

Requirements for entrance.—All the better universities and colleges exact a minimum of knowledge from those who matriculate. Some do this by imposing an entrance examination. Others allow certain schools, of whose excellence they are satisfied, to issue leaving certificates, the production of which entitles the bearer to be admitted without examination. This plan is said to work well.[1] No State seems to have succeeded better than Michigan in establishing a judiciously regulated and systematized relation between the public schools and the State university.[2]

Degrees and examinations.—It is only institutions which have been chartered by State authority that are deemed entitled to grant degrees. There are others which do so without any such legal title, but as the value of a degree *per se* is slight, the mischief done by these interlopers can hardly be serious. B.A., M.A., D.D., and LL.D., the two latter usually for honorary purposes,[3] are the only degrees conferred in the great majority of colleges: but of late years the larger universities have, in creating new courses, created a variety of new degrees also.[4]

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[1] At Harvard I was informed that about one-third of the students came from the public (*i.e.* publicly supported) schools. The proportion is in most universities larger. There is a growing tendency in America, especially in the East, for boys of the richer class to be sent to private schools, and the number and excellence of such schools increases.

[2] See President Angell's Commemorative Address to the University of Michigan, June 30, 1887.

[3] Honorary degrees are in some institutions, and not usually those of the highest standing, conferred with a profuseness which seems to argue an exaggerated appreciation of inconspicuous merit.

[4] Mr. D. C. Gilman (President of Johns Hopkins University) mentions the following among the degree titles awarded in some institutions to women, the titles of Bachelor and Master being deemed inappropriate:—Laureate of Science, Proficient in Music, Maid of Philosophy, Mistress of Polite Literature, Mistress of Music (*North American Review* for March 1885).

Degrees are awarded by examination, but never, I think, as often in Europe, upon a single examination held after the course of study has been completed. The student, as he goes through the various classes which make up his course, is examined, sometimes at frequent intervals, sometimes at the end of each year, on the work done in the classes or on prescribed books, and the degree is ultimately awarded or refused on the combined result of all these tests. At no point in his career is he expected to submit to any one examination comparable, for the combined number and difficulty of the subjects in which he is questioned, to the final honour examinations at Oxford or Cambridge, even as now constituted, much less as they stood fifty years ago.

There is indeed no respect in which the American system is more contrasted with that of Oxford and Cambridge than the comparatively small part assigned to the award of honours. In England the Class list or Tripos has for many years past, ever since the universities awoke from their lethargy of last century, been the main motive power in stimulating undergraduates to exertion and in stemming the current which runs so strongly towards amusement and athletic exercises. Examinations have governed teaching instead of being used to test it. In the United States, although most universities and colleges reward with some sort of honourable mention the students who have acquitted themselves conspicuously well, graduation honours are not a great object of ambition; they win little fame within the institution, they are scarcely noticed beyond its walls. In many universities there is not even the stimulus, which acts powerfully in Scotland, of class prizes, awarded by examination or by the votes of the students. It is only a few institutions that possess scholarships awarded by competition. American teachers seem to find the discipline of their regular class system sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of diligence among their students, being doubtless aided by the fact that, in all but a very few universities, the vast majority of the students come from simple homes, possess scanty means, and have their way in life to make. Diligence is the tradition of the American colleges, especially of those remote from the dissipating influences and social demands of large cities. Even the greater universities have never been, as the English universities avowedly were in last century, and to a great extent are still, primarily places for spending three or four pleasant years, only incidentally places of instruction.

With some drawbacks, this feature of the American seminaries has two notable merits. One is that it escapes that separation which has grown up in Oxford and Cambridge between pass or poll men and honour men. Every student supposes himself to have come to college for the purpose of learning something. In all countries, even in Switzerland and Scotland, there is a percentage of idle men in places of study; but the idleness of an American student is due to something in his own character or circumstances, and does not, as in the case of the English "pollman," rest on a theory in his own mind, probably shared by his parents, that he entered the university in order to enjoy himself and form useful social connections. The other merit is that the love of knowledge and truth is not, among the better minds, vulgarized by being made the slave of competition and of the passion for quick and conspicuous success. An American student is not induced by his university to think less of the intrinsic value of what he is learning than of how far it will pay in an examination: nor does he regard his ablest fellow-students as his rivals over a difficult course for high stakes, rivals whose speed and strength he must constantly be comparing with his own. Americans who have studied in an English university after graduating in one of their own have told me that nothing surprised them more in England than the incessant canvassing of one another's intellectual capabilities which went on among the undergraduates.[1] Probably less work is got out of the better American students than the examination system exacts from the same class of men in Oxford and Cambridge. Possibly the qualities of readiness and accuracy are not so thoroughly trained. Possibly it is a loss not to be compelled to carry for a few weeks a large mass of facts in one's mind under the obligation of finding any one at a moment's notice. Those who direct the leading American universities recognize in these points the advantages of English practice. But they conceive that the corresponding disadvantages are much greater, and are in this matter more inclined to commiserate Oxford and Cambridge than to imitate them.

Nearly all American students do graduate, that is to say, as those who would be likely to fail drop off before the close of the fourth year, the proportion of plucks in the later examinations is small. As regards the worth of the degrees given, there is of course the greatest possible difference between those of the better and those of the lower institutions, nor is this difference merely one between the few great universities and the mass of small colleges or Western State universities, for among the smaller colleges there are some which maintain as high a standard of thoroughness as the greatest. The degrees of the two hundred colleges to which I have referred as belonging to the lower group of the third class have no assignable value, except that of indicating that a youth has been made to work during four years at subjects above the elementary. Those of institutions belonging to the higher group and the two other classes represent, on an average, as much knowledge and mental discipline as the poll or pass degrees of Cambridge or Oxford, possibly rather less than the pass degrees of the Scottish universities. Between the highest American degrees and the honour degrees of Oxford and Cambridge it is hard to make any comparison.

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[1] If this be true of England, the evil is probably no smaller under the class prize system of Scotland.

A degree is in the United States given only to those who have followed a prescribed course in the teaching institution which confers it. No American institution has so far departed from the old and true conception of a university, approved by both history and policy, as to become a mere examining board, awarding degrees to anybody who may present himself from any quarter. However, the evils of existing arrangements, under which places below the level of German *gymnasia* are permitted to grant academic titles, are deemed so serious by some educational reformers that it has been proposed to create in each State a single degree-conferring authority to which the various institutions within the State should be, so to speak, tributary, sending up their students to its examinations, which would of course be kept at a higher level than most of the present independent bodies maintain. This is what physicians call a "heroic remedy"; and with all respect to the high authorities who now advocate it, I hope they will reconsider the problem, and content themselves with methods of reform less likely to cramp the freedom of university teaching.

Notwithstanding these evils, and the vast distance between the standard of a university like Johns Hopkins at the one end of the scale, and that of the colleges of Arkansas at the other, a degree, wherever obtained, seems to have a certain social value

"It is," said one of my informants, "a thing which you would mention regarding a young man for whom you were writing a letter of introduction." This does not mean very much, but it is better than nothing ; it would appear to give a man some sort of advantage in seeking for educational or literary work. In several States a man who can point to his degree obtains speedier entrance to the bar, and some denominations endeavour to secure that their clergy shall have graduated.

Post-graduate courses.—Several of the leading universities have lately instituted sets of lectures for students who have completed the regular four years' collegiate course and taken their B.A. or B.Sc., hoping in this way to provide for the special study of subjects for which room cannot be found in the regular course. Johns Hopkins University has devoted itself especially to this function. Its object was not so much to rival the existing universities as to discharge a function which many of them had not the means of undertaking—that of providing the highest special instruction, not necessarily in every subject, but in subjects which it could secure the ablest professors to teach. It has already done much admirable work in this direction, and made good its claim to a place in the front rank of transatlantic seats of education. There are also many graduates who, desiring to devote themselves to some particular branch of science or learning, such as experimental physics, philology, or history, spend a semester or two at a German university. Extremely few come to Oxford or Cambridge. American professors, when asked why they send their men exclusively to Germany, considering that in England they would have the advantage of a more interesting social life, and of seeing how England is trying to deal with problems similar in many respects to their own, answer that the English universities make no provision for any students except those who wish to go through one of the regular degree courses, and are so much occupied in preparing men to pass examinations as to give, except in two or three branches, but little advanced teaching. There can be no doubt that if Oxford and Cambridge offered the advantages which Leipzig and Berlin do, the afflux to the two former of American graduates would soon be considerable.

Professional and Scientific Schools.—Besides the very large number of schools for all the practical arts, agriculture, engineering, mining, and so forth, as well as for the professions of theology, law, and medicine, statistics of which have been already given, some universities have established scientific schools, or agricultural schools, or theological, legal, and medical faculties. The theological faculties are usually denominational; but Harvard, which used to be practically Unitarian, has now an unsectarian faculty, in which there are several learned divines belonging to Trinitarian denominations; and no difficulty seems to have arisen in working this arrangement. The law school is usually treated as a separate department, to which students may resort who have not graduated in the university. The course is usually of two, sometimes of three, years, and covers all the leading branches of common law, equity, crimes, civil and criminal procedure. Many of these schools are extremely efficient.

Research.—No special provision seems to have been made (except by the Johns Hopkins and Harvard fellowships) for the promotion of research as apart from the work of learning and teaching; but there has been some talk as to the desirability of founding fellowships or other endowments for this purpose, and the unceasing munificence of private benefactors may be expected to supply the necessary funds. There is now, especially in the greater universities, a good deal of specialization in teaching, so an increasing number of professors are able to occupy themselves with research.

Aids to deserving students.—Extremely few colleges have scholarships or bursaries open to competition like those of the colleges in Oxford and Cambridge and of the Scottish universities, still fewer have fellowships. But in a large number there exist funds, generally placed at the disposal of the President or the Faculty, which are applicable for the benefit of industrious men who need help: and it is common to remit fees in the case of those whose circumstances warrant the indulgence. When, as occasionally happens, free places or grants out of these funds are awarded upon examination, it would be thought improper for any one to compete whose circumstances placed him above the need of pecuniary aid: when the selection is left to the college authorities, they are said to discharge it with honour able impartiality. Having often asked whether favouritism was complained of, I could never hear that it was. In some colleges there exists a loan fund, out of which money is advanced to the poor student who afterwards repays it.[1] The denominations often give assistance to promising youths who intend to enter the ministry. Says one of my most experienced informants: "In our country any young fellow of ability and energy can get education without paying for it."[2] The experiment tried at Cornell University in the way of providing remunerative labour for poor students who were at the same time to follow a course of instruction, seems to have had a very qualified success, for the double effort is found to impose too severe a strain.

Social life of the students. — Those who feel that not only the keenest pleasure, but the most solid moral and intellectual benefit of their university life lay in the friendships which they formed in that happy spring-time, will ask how in this respect America compares with England. Oxford and Cambridge, with their historic colleges maintaining a corporate life from century to century, bringing the teachers into easy and friendly relations with the taught, forming between the members of each society a close and almost family tie which is not incompatible with loyalty to the great corporation for whose sake all the minor corporations exist, have succeeded in producing a more polished, graceful, and I think also intellectually stimulative, type of student life than either Germany, with its somewhat boyish frolics of duelling and compotations, or Scotland, where the youth has few facilities for social intercourse with his class-mates and none with his professor. The American universities occupy an intermediate position between those of England and those of Germany or Scotland. Formerly all or nearly all the students were lodged in buildings called dormitories—which, however, were not merely sleeping places, but contained sitting-rooms jointly tenanted by two or more students,—and meals were taken in common. This is still the practice in the smaller colleges, and remains firmly rooted in Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. In the new State universities, and in nearly all universities planted in large cities, the great bulk of the students board with private families, or (more rarely) live in lodgings or hotels, and an increasing number have begun to do so even in places which, like Harvard and Brown University (Rhode Island) and Cornell, have some dormitories. The dormitory plan works well in comparatively small establishments, especially when, as is the case with the smaller denominational colleges, they are almost like large families, and are permeated by a religious spirit. But in the larger universities the tendency is now towards letting the students reside where they please. The maintenance of discipline gives less trouble; the poorer student is less inclined to imitate or envy the luxurious habits of the rich. The chief breaches of order which the authorities have to deal with arise in dormitories from the practice of "hazing," *i.e.* playing practical jokes, especially upon freshmen. In an American college the students are classed by years, those of the first year being called freshmen, of the second year sophomores, of the third year juniors, of the fourth year seniors. The bond between the members of each "class" (*i.e.* the entrants of the same year) is a pretty close one, and they are apt to act together. Between sophomores and freshmen—for the seniors and juniors are supposed to have put away childish things—there is a smouldering jealousy which sometimes breaks out into a strife sufficiently acute, though there is seldom anything more than mischievously high spirits behind it, to give the President and Faculty trouble.[1] Otherwise the conduct of the students is generally good. Intoxication, gaming, or other vices are rare, those who come to work, as the vast majority do, being little prone to such faults; one scarcely hears them mentioned as evils to be dealt with except in two or three of the universities situate in or near large cities and resorted to by the sons of the rich. Of late years the passion for base-ball, football, rowing, and athletic exercises generally, has become very strong in the universities last mentioned, where fashionable youth congregates, and the student who excels in these seems to be as much a hero among his comrades as a member of the University Eight or Eleven is at Cambridge or Oxford.

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[1] President Garfield obtained his education at Williams College by the help of such a fund.

[2] Fees, in the West especially, are low, indeed many Western State universities require none. In the University of Michigan a student belonging to the State pays $10 on admission and an annual fee of $20 (Literary Department), or $25 (other departments), students from without the State paying $25 (admission), $30 (Literary Department), $35 (other departments).

The absence of colleges constituting social centres within a university has helped to develop in the American universities one of their most peculiar and interesting institutions—I mean the Greek letter societies. There are clubs or fraternities of students, denoted by two or three Greek letters, the initials of the secret fraternity motto. Some of these fraternities exist in one college only, but the greater are established in a good many universities and colleges, having in each what is called a Chapter, and possessing in each a sort of club house, with several meeting and reading rooms, and sometimes also with bedrooms for the members. In some colleges as many as a third or a half of the students belong to a fraternity, which is an institution recognized and patronized by the authorities. New members are admitted by the votes of the Chapter; and to obtain early admission to one of the best is no small compliment. They are, so far as I know, always non-political, though political questions may be debated and political essays read at their meetings; and one is told that they allow no intoxicants to be kept in their buildings or used at the feasts they provide. They are thus something between an English club and a German *Studenten Corps*, but with the element of the literary or "mutual improvement" society thrown in. They are deemed a valuable part of the university system, not so much because they cultivate intellectual life as on account of their social influence. It is an object of ambition to be elected a member; it is a point of honour for a member to maintain the credit of the fraternity. Former members, who are likely to include some of the university professors, keep up their connection with the fraternity, and often attend its chapters in the college, or its general meetings. Membership constitutes a bond between old members during their whole life, so that a member on settling in some distant city would probably find there persons who had belonged to his fraternity, and would be admitted to their local gatherings.[1] Besides these there exist a few honorary societies into which students are elected in virtue of purely literary or scientific acquirements, as evidenced in the college examinations. The oldest and most famous is called the Φ Β Κ, which is said to mean φιλοσοφία βιοῦ κυβερνήτης, and exists in nearly all the leading universities in most of the States.

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[1] Sophomores and freshmen have a whimsical habit of meeting one another in dense masses and trying which can push the other aside on the stairs or path. This is called "rushing." In some universities the admission of women as students has put an end to it.

Religion.—I have already observed that many of the American universities, and probably a majority of the smaller colleges, are denominational. This term, however, does not mean what it would mean in Europe, or at least in England. It means that they have been founded by or in connection with a particular church, and that they remain to some extent associated with it or influenced by it. But, except as regards the Roman Catholic institutions, there is seldom any exclusion of teachers, and never of students belonging to other churches, nor any attempt to give the instruction (except, of course, in the theological department, if there be one) a sectarian cast. Although it usually happens that students belonging to the church which influences the college are more numerous than those of any other church, students of other persuasions abound; nor are efforts made to proselytize them. For instance, Harvard retains a certain flavour of Unitarianism, and has one or two Unitarian clergymen among the professors in its theological faculty; Yale has always been Congregationalist, and has by its charter ten Congregationalist clergymen among its trustees, and it always has a Congregationalist clergyman as its president, as Brown University has a Baptist clergyman. Princeton is still more specifically Presbyterian, and the Episcopalians have several denominational colleges, in which the local bishop is one of the trustees.[1] But neither Harvard, Yale, Brown, nor Princeton now gives a preference as regards the choice of its professors to one denomination over another; all are resorted to alike by students belonging to any church or to none.

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[1] There are, of course, other students' societies besides these Greek letter ones, and in some universities the Greek letter societies have become purely social rather than literary. One of them is regarded with much suspicion by the authorities.

In all the older universities, and in the vast majority of the more recent ones, there is a chapel in which religious services are regularly held, short prayers on the five week-days and sometimes also a full service twice on Sundays. In most institutions every student, unless of course he has some conscientious objection, is expected to attend. The service seldom or never contains anything of a sectarian character, and arrangements are sometimes made for having it conducted by the clergy of various denominations in turn. Even among the professedly neutral new State universities, there are some which, like the University of Michigan, have daily prayers. There are of course persons who think that an unsectarian place of education cannot be a truly Christian place of education, and Cornell University in its early days had to face attacks directed against it on this score.[1] But the more prevalent view is that a university ought to be in a general sense religious without being sectarian.[2]

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[1] Brown University, formerly called Rhode Island College (founded in 1764), is in the rather peculiar position of having by its regulation four denominations, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Quakers, represented on its two governing bodies, the trustees and the fellows, the Baptists having a majority.

The provision of University Education for Women.—The efforts made and experiments tried in this matter furnish matter for a treatise. All I have space to mention is that these efforts have chiefly flowed in two channels. One is the admission of women to co-education with men in the same places of higher education. This has gone on for many years in some of the denominational colleges of the West, such as Oberlin and Antioch in Ohio. Both sexes have been taught in the same classes, meeting in the hours of recreation, but lodged in separate buildings. My informants all commended the plan, declaring that the effect on the manners and general tone of the students was excellent. The State universities founded of late years in the West are by law open to women as well as to men. The number of women attending is always smaller than that of men, yet in some institutions it is considerable, as for instance at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor there were, in 1885-86, 135 women and 461 men, while Antioch had 80 women and 114 men. Students live where they will, but are taught in the same classes, generally, however, sitting on opposite sides of the class-room. The evidence given to me as to the working of this system in the Universities of California and Michigan, as well as in Cornell University, was favourable.

In the Eastern States the tendency has been to establish universities or colleges exclusively for women. There are persons even in the East who would prefer the scheme of co-education, but the more general view is that the stricter etiquette and what is called the "more complex civilization" of the older States render this undesirable. Among these colleges the best known, and apparently the most complete and efficient,[1] are Vassar, at Poughkeepsie, New York; Wellesley and Smith in Massachusetts; Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania. I visited the two former, and was much impressed by the earnestness and zeal for learning by which both the professors and the students seemed to be inspired, as well as by the high level of the teaching given. They have happily escaped the temptation to which some similar institutions in England seem to yield, of making everything turn upon degree examinations. Harvard has established, in what is called its Annex, a sort of separate department for women, in which the university professors lecture. I have no adequate data for comparing the quality of the education given to women in America with that provided by women's colleges, and especially by Girton and Newnham, in England, but there can be no doubt that the eagerness to make full provision for women has been keener in the former country, and that a much larger number avail themselves of what has been provided.[2]

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[1] At Cornell University there exists a Sunday preachership endowed with a fund of $30,000 (£6000), which is used to recompense the services of distinguished ministers of different denominations who preach in succession during twenty-one Sundays of the academic year. The founder was an Episcopalian, whose first idea was to have a chaplaincy limited to ministers of his denomination, but the trustees refused the endowment on such terms. The only students who absent themselves are Roman Catholics.

[2] This idea is exactly expressed in the regulations for the most recent great foundation, that of Mr. Leland Stanford in California. It is declared to be the duty of the trustees "to prohibit sectarian instruction, but to have taught in the University the immortality of the soul, the existence of an all-wise and benevolent Creator, and that obedience to His laws is the highest duty of man." The founders further declare, "While it is our desire that there shall be no sectarian teaching in this institution, it is very far from our thoughts to exclude divine service. We have provided that a suitable building be erected, wherein the professors of the various religious denominations shall from time to time be invited to deliver discourses not sectarian in character."

General observations.—The European reader will by this time have perceived how hard it is to give such a general estimate of the educational and social worth of the higher teaching in the United States as one might give of the universities of Germany, England, or Scotland. In America the universities are not, as they are in those countries, a well-defined class of institutions. Not only is the distance between the best and the worst greater than that which in Germany separates Leipzig from Rostock, or in England Cambridge from Durham, but the gradations from the best down to the worst are so imperceptible that one can nowhere draw a line and say that here the true university stops and the pretentious school begins.[1] As has been observed already, a large number present the external seeming and organization—the skeleton plan, so to speak—of a university with the actual performance of a rather raw school.

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[1] In 1885-86 Wellesley had 520 students, with 75 professors and teachers (61 women and 14 men), and an income from its endowment of $23,000.

[2] The Tables (for 1887) of the Bureau of Education mention 204 institutions for the superior instruction of women, and state that about two-thirds of these are authorized by law to confer degrees. Nearly all of these, indeed all but four or five, are practically schools. The two-thirds giving degrees "offer a curriculum closely resembling the ordinary college course; greater option, however, seems to be allowed than in the Arts colleges for men, and as a rule modern languages engage more attention than the classics. On the whole, the experience of these schools seems to indicate that identity of training for the two sexes is not as yet generally demanded in the United States."—Report, p. 440.

Moreover, the American universities and colleges are in a state of transition. True, nearly everything in America is changing, the apparently inflexible Constitution not excepted. But the changes that are passing in the universities are only to be paralleled by those that pass upon Western cities. The number of small colleges, especially in the Mississippi and Pacific States, is increasing. The character of the Eastern universities is being constantly modified. The former multiply, because under the Federal system every State likes to have its own universities numerous and its inhabitants independent of other States, even as respects education; while the abundance of wealth, the desire of rich men to commemorate themselves and to benefit their community, and the rivalry of the churches, lead to the establishment of new colleges where none are needed, and where money would be better spent in improving those which exist. Individualism and *laissez faire* have in this matter at least free scope, for a State legislature is always ready to charter any number of new degree-giving bodies.[2] Meanwhile the great institutions of the Atlantic States continue to expand and develop not merely owing to the accretion of wealth to them from the liberality of benefactors, but because they are in close touch with Europe, resolved to bring their highest education up to the European level and to keep pace with the progress of science, filled with that love of experiment and spirit of enterprise which are so much stronger in America than anywhere else in the world.

Not the least interesting of the phenomena of to-day is the struggle which goes on in the Middle and Western States between the greater, and especially the State universities, and the small denominational colleges. The latter, which used to have the field to themselves, are now afraid of being driven off it by the growth of the former, and are redoubling their exertions not only to increase their own resources and students, but—at least in some States—to prevent the State university from obtaining larger grants from the State treasury. They allege that the unsectarian character of the State establishments, as well as the freedom allowed to their students, makes them less capable of giving a moral and religious training. But as the graduates of the State universities become numerous in the legislatures and influential generally, and as it is more and more clearly seen that the small colleges cannot, for want of funds, provide the various appliances—libraries, museums, laboratories, and so forth—which universities need, the balance seems likely to incline in favour of the State universities. It is probable that while these will rise towards the level of their Eastern sisters, many of the denominational colleges will subside into the position of places of preparatory training.

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[1] Even in Europe it is curious to note how each country is apt to think the universities of the other to be rather schools than universities. The Germans call Oxford and Cambridge schools, because they have hitherto given comparatively little professional and specialized teaching. The English call the Scotch universities schools because many of their students enter at fifteen.

[2] The New York legislature recently offered a charter to the Chautauqua gathering, one of the most interesting institutions in America, standing midway between a university and a camp meeting, and representing both the religious spirit and the love of knowledge which characterize the better part of the native masses.

One praise which has often been given to the universities of Scotland may be given to those of America. While the German universities have been popular but not free, while the English universities have been free[1] but not popular, the American universities have been both free and popular. Although some have been managed on too narrow a basis, the number has been so great that the community have not suffered. They have been established so easily, they have so fully reflected the habits and conditions of the people, as to have been accessible to every stratum of the population. They show all the merits and all the faults of a development absolutely uncontrolled by government, and little controlled even by the law which binds endowments down to the purposes fixed by a founder,[2] because new foundations were constantly rising, and new endowments were accruing to the existing foundations. Accordingly, while a European observer is struck by their inequalities and by the crudeness of many among them, he is also struck by the life, the spirit, the sense of progress, which pervade them. In America itself educational reformers are apt to deplore the absence of control. They complain of the multiplication of degree-giving bodies, and consequent lowering of the worth of a degree. They point to the dissipation over more than thirty colleges, as in Ohio, of the funds and teaching power which might have produced one first-rate university. One strong institution in a State does more, they argue, to raise the standard of teaching and learning, and to civilise the region which it serves, than can be done by twenty weak ones.

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[1] Free as regards self-government in matters of education, for they were tightly bound by theological restrictions till A.D. 1871.

[2] The law of most American States has not yet recognized the necessity of providing proper methods for setting aside the dispositions made by founders when circumstances change or their regulations prove unsuitable. Endowments, if they continue to increase at their present rate, will become a very doubtful blessing unless this question is boldly dealt with.

The European observer, while he admits this, conceives that his American friends may not duly realize the services which these small colleges perform in the rural districts of the country. They get hold of a multitude of poor men, who might never resort to a distant place of education. They set learning in a visible form, plain, indeed, and humble, but dignified even in her humility, before the eyes of a rustic people, in whom the love of knowledge, naturally strong, might never break from the bud into the flower but for the care of some zealous gardener. They give the chance of rising in some intellectual walk of life to many a strong and earnest nature who might otherwise have remained an artisan or storekeeper, and perhaps failed in those avocations. They light up in many a country town what is at first only a farthing rushlight, but which, when the town swells to a city, or when endowments flow in, or when some able teacher is placed in charge, becomes a lamp of growing flame, which may finally throw its rays over the whole State in which it stands. In some of these smaller Western colleges one finds to-day men of great ability and great attainments, one finds students who are receiving an education quite as thorough, though not always as wide, as the best Eastern universities can give. I do not at all deny that the time for more concentration has come, and that restrictions on the power of granting degrees would be useful. But one who recalls the history of the West during the last fifty years, and bears in mind the tremendous rush of ability and energy towards a purely material development which has marked its people, will feel that this uncontrolled freedom of teaching, this multiplication of small institutions, have done for the country a work which a few State-regulated universities might have failed to do. The higher learning is in no danger. The great universities of the East, as well as one or two in the West, are already beginning to rival the ancient universities of Europe. They will soon have far greater funds at their command with which to move towards the same ideal as Germany sets before herself; and they have already what is better than funds—an ardour and industry among the teachers which equals that displayed fifty years ago in Germany by the foremost men of the generation which raised the German schools to their glorious pre-eminence.

It may be thought that an observer familiar with two universities which are among the oldest and most famous in Europe, and are beyond question the most externally sumptuous and beautiful, would be inclined to disparage the corresponding institutions of the United States, whose traditions are comparatively short, and in whose outward aspect there is little to attract the eye or touch the imagination. I have not found it so. An Englishman who visits America can never feel sure how far his judgment has been affected by the warmth of the welcome he receives. But if I may venture to state the impression which the American universities have made upon me, I will say that while of all the institutions of the country they are those of which the Americans speak most modestly, and indeed deprecatingly, they are those which seem to be at this moment making the swiftest progress, and to have the brightest promise for the future. They are supplying exactly those things which European critics have hitherto found lacking to America: and they are contributing to her political as well as to her contemplative life elements of inestimable worth.

CHAPTER CII

THE CHURCHES AND THE CLERGY

In examining the National Government and the State Governments we have never once had occasion to advert to any ecclesiastical body or question, because with such matters government has in the United States absolutely nothing to do. Of all the differences between the Old World and the New this is perhaps the most salient. Half the wars of Europe, half the internal troubles that have vexed European states, from the Monophysite controversies in the Roman empire of the fifth century down to the Kulturkampf in the German empire of the nineteenth, have arisen from theological differences or from the rival claims of church and state. This whole vast chapter of debate and strife has remained virtually unopened in the United States. There is no Established Church. All religious bodies are absolutely equal before the law, and unrecognized by the law, except as voluntary associations of private citizens.

The Federal Constitution contains the following prohibitions:—

> Art. VI. No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.
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> Amendment I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

No attempt has ever been made to alter or infringe upon these provisions. They affect the National Government only, placing no inhibition on the States, and leaving the whole subject to their uncontrolled discretion, though subject to the general guarantees against oppression.

Every State constitution contains provisions generally similar to the above. Most declare that every man may worship God according to his own conscience, or that the free enjoyment of all religious sentiments and forms of worship shall be held sacred;[1] most also provide that no man shall be compelled to support or attend any church; some forbid the creation of an established church, and many the showing of a preference to any particular sect; while many provide that no money shall ever be drawn from the State treasury, or from the funds of any municipal body, to be applied for the benefit of any church or sectarian institution or denominational school. Twenty-seven constitutions forbid any religious test to be required as a qualification for office; some declare that this principle extends to all civil rights; some specify that religious belief is not to affect a man's competence as a witness. But in several States there still exist qualifications worth noting. Vermont and Delaware declare that every sect ought to maintain some form of religious worship, and Vermont adds that it ought to observe the Lord's Day. Six Southern States exclude from office any one who denies the existence of a Supreme Being. Besides these six, Pennsylvania and Tennessee pronounce a man ineligible for office who does not believe in God and in a future state of rewards and punishments. Maryland and Arkansas even make such a person incompetent as a juror or witness.[2] Religious freedom has been generally thought of in America in the form of freedom and equality as between different sorts of Christians, or at any rate different sorts of theists; persons opposed to religion altogether have till recently been extremely few everywhere and practically unknown in the South. The neutrality of the State cannot therefore be said to be theoretically complete.[3]

In earlier days the States were very far from being neutral. Those of New England, except Rhode Island, began with a sort of Puritan theocracy, and excluded from some civil rights persons who stood outside the religious community. Congregationalism was the ruling faith, and Roman Catholics, Quakers, and Baptists were treated with great severity. The early constitutions of several States recognized what was virtually a State church, requiring each locality to provide for and support the public worship of God. It was not till 1818 that Connecticut in adopting her new constitution placed all religious bodies on a level, and left the maintenance of churches to the voluntary action of the faithful. In Massachusetts a tax for the support of the Congregationalist Churches was imposed on all citizens not belonging to some other incorporated religious body until 1811, and religious equality was first fully recognized by a constitutional amendment of 1833. In Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Maryland, Protestant Episcopacy was the established form of religion till the Revolution, when under the impulse of the democratic spirit, and all the more heartily because the Anglican clergy were prone to Toryism (as attachment to the British connection was called), and because, at least in Virginia, there had been some persecution of Nonconformists, all religious distinctions were abolished and special ecclesiastical privileges withdrawn. In Pennsylvania no church was ever legally established. In New York, however, first the Dutch Reformed, and afterwards the Anglican Church had in colonial days enjoyed a measure of State favour. What is remarkable is that in all these cases the disestablishment, if one may call it by that name, of the privileged church was accomplished with no great effort, and left very little rancour behind. In the South it seemed a natural outcome of the Revolution. In New England it came more gradually, as the necessary result of the political development of each commonwealth. The ecclesiastical arrangements of the States were not inwoven with the pecuniary interests of any wealthy or socially dominant class; and it was felt that equality and democratic doctrine generally were too palpably opposed to the maintenance of any privileges in religious matters to be defensible in argument. However, both in Connecticut and Massachusetts there was a political struggle over the process of disestablishment, and the Congregationalist ministers predicted evils from a change which they afterwards admitted to have turned out a blessing to their own churches. No voice has ever since been raised in favour of reverting—I will not say to a State establishment of religion—but even to any State endowment, or State regulation of ecclesiastical bodies. It is accepted as an axiom by all Americans that the civil power ought to be not only neutral and impartial as between different forms of faith, but ought to leave these matters entirely on one side, regarding them no more than it regards the artistic or literary pursuits of the citizens.[1] There seem to be no two opinions on this subject in the United States. Even the Protestant Episcopalian clergy, who are in many ways disposed to admire and envy their brethren in England; even the Roman Catholic bishops, whose creed justifies the enforcement of the true faith by the secular arm, assure the European visitor that if State establishment were offered them they would decline it, preferring the freedom they enjoy to any advantages the State could confer. Every religious community can now organize itself in whatever way it pleases, lay down its own rules of faith and discipline, create and administer its own system of judicature, raise and apply its funds at its uncontrolled discretion. A church established by the State would not be able to do all these things, because it would also be controlled by the State, and it would be exposed to the envy and jealousy of other sects.

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[1] Four States provide that this declaration is not to be taken to excuse breaches of the public peace, many that it shall not excuse acts of licentiousness or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State, and three that no person shall disturb others in their religious worship.

[2] Full details on these points will be found in Mr. Stimson's valuable collection entitled *American Statute Law*.

[3] Nevada has recently disfranchised all Mormons resident within her bounds; but Mormonism is attacked not so much as a religion as in respect of its social features and hierarchical character.

The only controversies that have arisen regarding State action in religious matters have turned upon the appropriation of public funds to charitable institutions managed by some particular denomination. Such appropriations are expressly prohibited in the constitutions of some States. But it may happen that the readiest way of promoting some benevolent public purpose is to make a grant of money to an institution already at work, and successfully serving that purpose. As this reason may sometimes be truly given, so it is also sometimes advanced where the real motive is to purchase the political support of the denomination to which the institution belongs, or at least of its clergy. In some States, and particularly in New York, State or city legislatures are often charged with giving money to Roman Catholic institutions for the sake of securing the Catholic vote.[2] In these cases, however, the money always purports to be voted not for a religious but for a philanthropic or educational purpose. No ecclesiastical body would be strong enough to obtain any grant to its general funds, or any special immunity for its ministers. The passion for equality in religious as well as secular matters is everywhere in America far too strong to be braved, and nothing excites more general disapprobation than any attempt by an ecclesiastical organization to interfere in politics. The hostility to Mormonism is due not merely to the practice of polygamy, but also to the notion that the hierarchy of the Latter Day Saints constitutes a secret and tyrannical *imperium in imperio* opposed to the genius of democratic institutions.

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[1] There is, however, and has for some time been, a movement led I think by some Baptist and Methodist ministers, for obtaining the insertion of the name of God in the Federal Constitution Those who desire this appear to hold that the instrument would be thereby in a manner sanctified, and a distinct national recognition of theism expressed.

[2] In 1870 the Roman Catholic schools and charities of New York received more than $400,000 (£80,000); about $72,000 were then also given to other denominational institutions.

The refusal of the civil power to protect or endow any form of religion is commonly represented in Europe as equivalent to a declaration of contemptuous indifference on the part of the State to the spiritual interests of its people. A State recognizing no church is called a godless State; the disestablishment of a church is described as an act of national impiety. Nothing can be farther from the American view, to an explanation of which it may be well to devote a few lines.

The abstention of the State from interference in matters of faith and worship may be advocated on two principles, which may be called the political and the religious. The former sets out from the principles of liberty and equality. It holds any attempt at compulsion by the civil power to be an infringement on liberty of thought, as well as on liberty of action, which could be justified only when a practice claiming to be religious is so obviously anti-social or immoral as to threaten the well-being of the community. Religious persecution, even in its milder forms, such as disqualifying the members of a particular sect for public office, is, it conceives, inconsistent with the conception of individual freedom and the respect due to the primordial rights of the citizen which modern thought has embraced. Even if State action stops short of the imposition of disabilities, and confines itself to favouring a particular church, whether by grants of money or by giving special immunities to its clergy, this is an infringement on equality, putting one man at a disadvantage compared with others in respect of matters which are not fit subjects for State cognizance.[1]

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[1] The question of course follows, What are the matters fit for State cognizance? but into this I do not enter, as I am not attempting to argue these intricate questions, but merely to indicate the general aspect they take in current discussion.

The second principle, embodying the more purely religious view of the question, starts from the conception of the church as a spiritual body existing for spiritual purposes, and moving along spiritual paths. It is an assemblage of men who are united by their devotion to an unseen Being, their memory of a past divine life, their belief in the possibility of imitating that life, so far as human frailty allows, their hopes for an illimitable future. Compulsion of any kind is contrary to the nature of such a body, which lives by love and reverence, not by law. It desires no State help, feeling that its strength comes from above, and that its kingdom is not of this world. It does not seek for exclusive privileges, conceiving that these would not only create bitterness between itself and other religious bodies, but might attract persons who did not really share its sentiments, while corrupting the simplicity of those who are already its members. Least of all can it submit to be controlled by the State, for the State, in such a world as the present, means persons many or most of whom are alien to its beliefs and cold to its emotions. The conclusion follows that the church as a spiritual entity will be happiest and strongest when it is left absolutely to itself, not patronized by the civil power, not restrained by law except when and in so far as it may attempt to quit its proper sphere and intermeddle in secular affairs.

Of these two views it is the former much more than the latter that has moved the American mind. The latter would doubtless be now generally accepted by religious people. But when the question arose in a practical shape in the earlier days of the Republic, arguments of the former or political order were found amply sufficient to settle it, and no practical purpose has since then compelled men either to examine the spiritual basis of the church, or to inquire by the light of history how far State action has during fifteen centuries helped or marred her usefulness. There has however been another cause at work, I mean the comparatively limited conception of the State itself which Americans have formed. The State is not to them, as to Germans or Frenchmen, and even to some English thinkers, an ideal moral power, charged with the duty of forming the characters and guiding the lives of its subjects. It is more like a commercial company, or perhaps a huge municipality created for the management of certain business in which all who reside within its bounds are interested, levying contributions and expending them on this business of common interest, but for the most part leaving the shareholders or burgesses to themselves. That an organization of this kind should trouble itself, otherwise than as matter of police, with the opinions or conduct of its members would be as unnatural as for a railway company to inquire how many of the shareholders were total abstainers. Accordingly it never occurs to the average American that there is any reason why State churches should exist, and he stands amazed at the warmth of European feeling on the matter.

Just because these questions have been long since disposed of, and excite no present passion, and perhaps also because the Americans are more practically easy-going than pedantically exact, the National government and the State governments do give to Christianity a species of recognition inconsistent with the view that civil government should be absolutely neutral in religious matters. Each House of Congress has a chaplain, and opens its proceedings each day with prayers. The President annually after the end of harvest issues a proclamation ordering a general thanksgiving, and occasionally appoints a day of fasting and humiliation. So prayers are offered in the State legislatures,[1] and State governors issue proclamations for days of religious observance. Congress in the crisis of the Civil War (July 1863) requested the President to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer. In the army and navy provision is made for religious services, conducted by chaplains of various denominations, and no difficulty seems to have been found in reconciling their claims. In most States there exist laws punishing blasphemy or profane swearing by the name of God (laws which however are in some places openly transgressed and in few or none enforced), laws restricting or forbidding trade or labour on the Sabbath, as well as laws protecting assemblages for religious purposes, such as camp-meetings or religious processions, from being disturbed. The Bible is read in the public State-supported schools, and though controversies have arisen on this head, the practice is evidently in accord with the general sentiment of the people.

The whole matter may, I think, be summed up by saying that Christianity is in fact understood to be, though not the legally established religion, yet the national religion.[1] So far from thinking their commonwealth godless, the Americans conceive that the religious character of a government consists in nothing but the religious belief of the individual citizens, and the conformity of their conduct to that belief. They deem the general acceptance of Christianity to be one of the main sources of their national prosperity, and their nation a special object of the Divine favour.

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[1] Though Michigan and Oregon forbid any appropriation of State funds for religious services.

The legal position of a Christian church is in the United States simply that of a voluntary association, or group of associations, corporate or unincorporate, under the ordinary law. There is no such thing as a special ecclesiastical law; all questions, not only of property but of church discipline and jurisdiction, are, if brought before the courts of the land, dealt with as questions of contract;[2] and the court, where it is obliged to examine a question of theology, as for instance whether a clergyman has advanced opinions inconsistent with any creed or formula to which he has bound himself—for it will prefer, if possible, to leave such matters to the proper ecclesiastical authority—will treat the point as one of pure legal interpretation, neither assuming to itself theological knowledge, nor suffering considerations of policy to intervene.[3]

As a rule, every religious body can organize itself in any way it pleases. The State does not require its leave to be asked, but permits any form of church government, any ecclesiastical order, to be created and endowed, any method to be adopted of vesting church property, either simply in trustees or in corporate bodies formed either under the general law of the State or under some special statute. Sometimes a limit is imposed on the amount of property, or of real estate, which an ecclesiastical corporation can hold; but, on the whole, it may be said that the civil power manifests no jealousy of the spiritual, but allows the latter a perfectly free field for expansion. Of course if any ecclesiastical authority were to become formidable either by its wealth or by its control over the members of its body, this easy tolerance would disappear; all I observe is that the difficulties often experienced, and still more often feared, in Europe, from the growth of organizations exercising tremendous spiritual powers, have in America never proved serious. Religious bodies are in so far the objects of special favour that their property is in most States exempt from taxation;[1] and this is reconciled to theory by the argument that they are serviceable as moral agencies, and diminish the expenses incurred in respect of police administration. Two or three States impose restrictions on the creation of religious corporations, and one, Maryland, requires the sanction of the legislature to dispositions of property to religious uses. But speaking generally, religious bodies are the objects of legislative favour.[2]

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[1] It has often been said that Christianity is a part of the common law of the States, as it has been said to be of the common law of England; but on this point there have been discrepant judicial opinions, nor can it be said to find any specific practical application. A discussion of it may be found in Justice Story's opinion in the famous Girard will case.

[2] Or otherwise as questions of private civil law. Actions for damages are sometimes brought against ecclesiastical authorities by persons deeming themselves to have been improperly accused or disciplined or deprived of the enjoyment of property.

[3] The Emperor Aurelian decided in a like neutral spirit a question that had arisen between two Christian churches.

I pass on to say a few words as to the religious bodies of the country.[3] Their respective numbers are uncertain, for the attempt made to take a religious census in 1880 failed. According to the figures given by the denominations themselves in 1887, the statistics of the chief among them are as follows:—

	Ministers.	Members.
Methodists—		
Episcopal	14,075	1,990,377
Episcopal of the South	4,434	1,056,058
Other Methodist bodies	...	1,480,000
Baptists	19,377	2,732,570
Minor Baptist bodies	5,872	854,000
Presbyterians	5,654	696,827
Southern Presbyterian Church	1,116	150,398
Other Presbyterian bodies	2,486	270,000
Lutherans	4,215	987,600
Congregationalists	4,090	436,379
Protestant Episcopalians	3,919	432,323

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[1] In his message of 1881 the Governor of Washington Territory recommends the legislature to exempt church property from taxation, not only on the ground that "churches and schoolhouses are the temples of education, and alike conduce to the cultivation of peace, happiness, and prosperity," but also because "churches enhance the value of contiguous property, which, were they abolished, would be of less value and return less revenue."

[2] New Hampshire has lately taxed churches on the value of their real estate exceeding $10,000 (£2000).

[3] An interesting and impartial summary view of the history of the chief denominations in the United States may be found in Dr. George P. Fisher's *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 559-582.

No data seem to exist for forming an estimate of the number of the Roman Catholics, but it is no doubt very large, especially in the great cities where so many of the European immigrants are to be found. They state it themselves at upwards of six millions. Of the above-mentioned denominations, the Methodists and Baptists are numerous everywhere, but the Methodists especially numerous in the South, where they have been the chief evangelizers of the negroes. The Congregationalists are chiefly to be found in New England and such parts of the Western States as have been peopled from New England. The Presbyterians are strongest in the Middle States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and in the South,[1] but are well represented over the West also. The Unitarians are very few outside New England and the regions settled from New England, but have exercised an influence far beyond that of their numbers owing to the eminence of some of their divines, such as Channing, Emerson, and Theodore Parker, and to the fact that they include a large number of highly-cultivated men.[2] The Roman Catholics are, except in Maryland and Louisiana, nearly all either of Irish, or German, or French-Canadian extraction. Of late years many Southern negroes are said to have been brought within the Roman fold.

It need hardly be said that there exist no such social distinctions between different denominations as those of England. No clergyman, no layman, either looks down upon or looks up to any other clergyman or layman in respect of his worshipping God in another way. The Roman Catholic Church of course stands aloof from the Protestant Christians, whom she considers schismatic; and although what is popularly called the doctrine of apostolic succession is less generally deemed vital by Protestant Episcopalians in America than it has come to be by them of late years in England, the clergy of that church do not admit to their pulpits pastors of other churches, though they sometimes appear in the pulpits of those churches. Such exchanges of pulpit are common among Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other orthodox Protestant bodies. In many parts of the North and West the Protestant Episcopal Church has long been slightly more fashionable than its sister churches; and people who have no particular "religious preferences," but wish to stand well socially, will sometimes add themselves to it.[1] In the South, however, Presbyterianism (and in some places Methodism) is equally well regarded from a worldly point of view; while everywhere the strength of Methodists and Baptists and Roman Catholics resides in the masses of the people.[2]

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[1] The strength of Presbyterianism in the South is probably due in part to the immigration into those States of Ulstermen in the middle of last century, and of settlers from Holland at a still earlier date.

[2] The Unitarian ministers are returned at 459.

Of late years proposals for union between some of the leading Protestant churches, and especially between the Presbyterians and Congregationalists and Lutherans, have been freely canvassed. They witness to a growing good feeling among the clergy, and a growing indifference to minor points of doctrine and church government. The vested interests of the existing clergy create some difficulties serious in small towns and country districts; but it seems possible that before many years more than one such union will be carried through.

The social standing of the clergy of each denomination corresponds pretty closely to the character of the denomination itself—that is to say, the pastors of the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, and Unitarian bodies come generally from a higher social stratum than those of the Methodists, Baptists, and Roman Catholics. The former are almost universally graduates of some university or college, have there mixed with other young men belonging to the better families of the place where they reside, and have obtained that university stamp which is much prized in America. As in Great Britain, comparatively few are the sons of the wealthy; and few come from the working classes. The position of a minister of the Gospel always carries with it some dignity—that is to say, it gives a man a certain advantage in the society, whatever it may be, to which he naturally belongs in respect of his family connections, his means, and his education. In the great cities the leading ministers of the chief denominations, including the

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[1] The proposal which has been more than once made in the annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, that it should call itself "The National Church of America," has been always rejected by the good sense of the majority, who perceive that an assumption of this kind would provoke much displeasure from other bodies of Christians.

[2] The Methodists and Baptists are said to make more use of social means in the work of evangelizing the masses, and to adapt themselves more perfectly to democratic ideas than do the other Protestant bodies.

Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal bishops, whether they be eminent as preachers or as active philanthropists, or in respect of their learning, are among the first citizens, and exercise an influence often wider and more powerful than that of any layman. In cities of the second order, the clergymen of these denominations, supposing them (as is usually the case) to be men of good breeding and personally acceptable, move in the best society of the place. Similarly in country places the pastor is better educated and more enlightened than the average members of his flock, and becomes a leader in works of beneficence. The level of education and learning is rising among the clergy with the steady improvement of the universities. This advance is perhaps most marked among those denominations which, like the Methodists and Baptists, have heretofore lagged behind, because their adherents were mostly among the poor. So far as I could learn, the incomes of the clergy are also increasing. Some few in the great cities receive $10,000 (£2000), or even more; while in smaller cities the average from all sources, including fees and gifts, among Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Unitarians, is stated to be about $3000 (£600), and in rural districts seldom to fall below $1000 (£200).[1] These figures, which, however, may be a little too high for some parts of the country, compare favourably with the incomes received by the clergy in England or Scotland, and are of course much above the salaries paid to priests in France or to Protestant pastors in Germany. Reckoning in the clergy of all denominations in Great Britain and in the United States, I think, that so far as it is possible to strike an average, both the pecuniary and the social position of the American clergy must be pronounced slightly better.

Although the influence of the clergy is still great it has changed its nature, yielding to the universal current which makes for equality. At the beginning of the century the New England ministers enjoyed a local authority not unlike that of the bishops in Western Europe in the sixth century or of the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland in the seventeenth. They were, especially in country places, the leaders as well as instructors of their congregations, and were a power in politics scarcely less than in spiritual affairs.[1] That order of things has quite passed away. His profession and his education still secure respect for a clergyman,[2] but he must not now interfere in politics; he must not speak on any secular subject *ex cathedra;* his influence, whatever it may be, is no longer official but can only be that of a citizen distinguished by his talents or character, whose office gives him no greater advantage than that of an eminence where shining gifts may be more widely visible. Now and then this rule of abstention from politics is broken through. Mr. Henry Ward Beecher took the field as a Mugwump in the presidential campaign of 1884, and was deemed the more courageous in doing so because the congregation of Plymouth Church were mostly "straight out" Republicans. A powerful demonstration of clergymen was organized in the same year on behalf of Mr. Blaine. The Roman Catholic bishops are sometimes accused of lending secret aid to the political party which will procure subventions for their schools and charities, and do no doubt, as indeed their doctrines require, press warmly the claims of denominational education. But otherwise they also abstain from politics. Such action as is constantly taken in England by ministers of the Established Church on the one side of politics, by Nonconformist ministers on the other, would in America excite disapproval. It is only on platforms or in conventions where some moral cause is to be advocated, such as Abolitionism was thirty years ago or temperance is now, that clergymen can with impunity appear.

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[1] The incomes of Baptist and Methodist pastors are smaller, except in a few cities, because the congregations are poorer.

Considering that the absence of State interference in matters of religion is one of the most striking differences between all the European countries on the one hand and the United States on the other, the European reader may naturally expect some further remarks on the practical results of this divergence.

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[1] In some States clergymen are still declared ineligible, by the Constitution, as members of a State legislature. They do not seem to have in the early days sat in these bodies; and they very rarely sit in Congress, but one finds them in conventions. Some of the best speeches in the Massachusetts Convention of 1788 which ratified the Federal Constitution were made by ministers. In New England, they were all or nearly all advocates of the Constitution, and passed into the Federalist party.

[2] The clergy are the objects of a good deal of favour in various small ways; for instance, they often receive free passes on railroads, and the recent Inter-State Commerce Act of 1887, while endeavouring to check the system of granting free passes, which had been much abused, specially exempted clergymen from the prohibition it imposed.

"There are," he will say, "two evil consequences with which the European defenders of established churches seek to terrify us when disestablishment and disendowment are mentioned, one that the authority and influence of religion will wane if State recognition is withdrawn, the other that the incomes of the clergy and their social status will sink, that they will in fact become plebeians, and that the centres of light which now exist in every country parish will be extinguished. There are also two benefits which the advocates of the 'Free Church in a Free State' promise us, one that social jealousies and bitternesses between different sects will melt away, and the other that the church will herself become more spiritual in her temper and ideas, more earnest in her proper work of moral reform and the nurture of the soul. What has American experience to say on these four points?"

These are questions so pertinent to a right conception of the ecclesiastical side of American life that I cannot decline the duty of trying to answer them, though reluctant to tread on ground to which European conflicts give a controversial character.

I. To estimate the influence and authority of religion is not easy. Suppose, however, that we take either the habit of attending church or the sale of religious books as evidences of its influence among the multitude: suppose that as regards the more cultivated classes we look at the amount of respect paid to Christian precepts and ministers, the interest taken in theological questions, the connection of philanthropic reforms with religion. Adding these various data together, we may get some sort of notion of the influence of religion on the American people as a whole.

Purposing to touch on these points in the chapter next following, I will here only say by way of anticipation that in all these respects the influence of Christianity seems to be, if we look not merely to the numbers but also to the intelligence of the persons influenced, greater and more widespread in the United States than in any part of western Continental Europe, and I think greater than in England. In France, Italy, Spain, and the Catholic parts of Germany, as well as in German Austria, the authority of religion over the masses is of course great. Its influence on the best educated classes—one must include all parts of society in order to form a fair judgment—is apparently smaller in France and Italy than in Great Britain, and I think distinctly smaller than in the United States. The country which most resembles America in this respect is Scotland, where the mass of the people enjoy large rights in the management of their church affairs, and where the interest of all classes has, ever since the Reformation, tended to run in ecclesiastical channels. So far from suffering from the want of State support, religion seems in the United States to stand all the firmer because, standing alone, she is seen to stand by her own strength. No political party, no class in the community, has any hostility either to Christianity or to any particular Christian body. The churches are as thoroughly popular, in the best sense of the word, as any of the other institutions of the country.

II. The social and economic position of the clergy in the United States is above that of the priesthood, taken as a whole, in Roman Catholic countries, and of all denominations, Anglican and Nonconformist, in England. No American pastors enjoy such revenues as the prelates of England and Hungary; but the average income attached to the pastoral office is in America larger. The peculiar conditions of England, where one church looks down socially on the others, make a comparison in other respects difficult. The education of the American ministers, their manners, their capacity for spreading light among the people, seem superior to those of the seminarist priesthood of France and Italy (who are of course far more of a distinct caste) and equal to those of the Protestant pastors of Germany and Scotland.

III. Social jealousies connected with religion scarcely exist in America, and one notes a kindlier feeling between all denominations, Roman Catholics included, a greater readiness to work together for common charitable aims, than between Catholics and Protestants in France or Germany, or between Anglicans and Nonconformists in England. There is a rivalry between the leading denominations to extend their bounds, to erect and fill new churches, to raise great sums for church purposes. But it is a friendly rivalry, which does not provoke bad blood, because the State stands neutral, and all churches have a free field. There is much less mutual exclusiveness than in any other country, except perhaps Scotland. An instance may be found in the habit of exchanging pulpits, another in the comparative frequency with which persons pass from one denomination to another, if a particular clergyman attracts them, or if they settle in a place distant from a church of their own body. One often finds members of the same family belonging to different denominations. Some of the leading bodies, and especially the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, between whose doctrines there exists practically no difference, have been wont, especially in the West, to co-operate for the sake of efficiency and economy in agreeing not to plant two rival churches in a place where one will suffice, but to arrange that one denomination shall set up its church, and the other advise its adherents to join and support that church.

IV. To give an opinion on the three foregoing questions is incomparably easier than to say whether and how much Christianity has gained in spiritual purity and dignity by her severance from the secular power.

There is a spiritual gain in that diminution of envy malice and uncharitableness between the clergy of various sects which has resulted from their being all on the same legal level; and the absence both of these faults and of the habit of bringing ecclesiastical questions into secular politics, gives the enemy less occasion to blaspheme than he is apt to have in Europe. Church assemblies — synods, conferences, and conventions — seem on the whole to be conducted with better temper and more good sense than these bodies have shown in the Old World, from the Council of Ephesus down to and in our own day. But in America as elsewhere some young men enter the clerical profession from temporal motives; some laymen join a church to improve their social or even their business position; some country pastors look out for city cures, and justify their leaving a poorer flock for a richer by talking of a wider sphere of usefulness. The desire to push the progress of the particular church or of the denomination often mingles with the desire to preach the gospel more widely; and the gospel is sometimes preached, if not with "respect of persons" yet with less faithful insistence on unpalatable truths than the moral health of the community requires.

So far as I could ascertain, the dependence of the minister for his support on his congregation does not lower him in their eyes, nor make him more apt to flatter the leading members than he is in established churches. If he is personally dignified and unselfish, his independence will be in no danger. But whether the voluntary system, which no doubt makes men more liberal in giving for the support of religious ordinances among themselves and of missions elsewhere, tends to quicken spiritual life, and to keep the church pure and undefiled, free from the corrupting influences of the world, is another matter, on which a stranger may well hesitate to speak. Those Americans whose opinion I have inquired are unanimous in holding that in this respect also the fruits of freedom have been good.

CHAPTER CIII

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

To convey some impression of the character and type which religion has taken in America, and to estimate its influence as a moral and spiritual force, is an infinitely harder task than to sketch the salient ecclesiastical phenomena of the country. I approach it with the greatest diffidence, and do not profess to give anything more than the sifted result of answers to questions addressed to many competent observers belonging to various churches or to none.

An obviously important point to determine is the extent to which the external ministrations of religion are supplied to the people and used by them. This is a matter on which no trustworthy statistics seem attainable, but on which the visitor's own eyes leave him in little doubt. There are churches everywhere, and everywhere equally : in the cities and in the country, in the North and in the South, in the quiet nooks of New England, in the settlements which have sprung up along railroads in the West. It is only in the very roughest parts of the West, and especially in the region of mining camps, that they are wanting, and the want is but temporary, for "home missionary" societies are quickly in the field, and provide the ministrations of religion even to this migratory population. In many a town of moderate size one finds a church for every thousand inhabitants, as was the case with Dayton, in Ohio, which, when it had 40,000 people, had just forty churches.

Denominational rivalry has counted for something in the rapid creation of churches in the newly settled West and their multiplication everywhere else. Small churches are sometimes maintained out of pride when it would be better to let them be united with other congregations of the same body. But the attendance is generally good. In cities of moderate size, as well as in small towns and country places, a stranger is told that the bulk of the native American population go to church at least once every Sunday. In the great cities the proportion of those who attend is far smaller, but whether or no as small as in English cities no one could tell me. One is much struck by the habit of church-going in the more settled parts of the Far West where the people, being new-comers, might be supposed to be less under the sway of habit and convention. California is an exception, and is the State supposed to be least affected by religious influences. But in the chief city of Oregon I found that a person, and especially a lady, who did not belong to some church and attend it pretty regularly, would be looked askance on. She need not actually lose caste, but the fact would excite surprise and regret; and her disquieted friends would put some pressure upon her to enrol herself as a church member.

The observance of the Sabbath as it was, or the Sunday as it is now more usually, called, furnishes another test. Although the strictness of Puritan practice has disappeared, even in New England, the American part of the rural population, especially in the South, refrains from amusement as well as from work.[1] It is otherwise with the Germans; and in some parts of the country their example has brought in laxity as regards amusement. Such cities as Chicago, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and San Francisco have a Sunday quite unlike that of New England,

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[1] An interesting summary of the laws for the observance of Sunday may be found in a paper read by Mr. Henry E. Young at the Third Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association (1880). These laws, which seem to exist in every State, are in many cases very strict, forbidding all labour, except works of necessity and mercy, and in many cases forbidding also travelling and nearly every kind of amusement. Vermont and South Carolina seem to go farthest in this direction. The former prescribes, under a fine of $2, that no one shall "visit from house to house, except from motives of humanity or charity, or travel from midnight of Saturday to midnight of Sunday, or hold or attend any ball or dance, or use any game, sport, or play, or resort to any house of entertainment for amusement or recreation."

In Indiana, where all labour and "engaging in one's usual avocation" are prohibited, it has been held by the Courts that "selling a cigar to one who has contracted the habit of smoking is a work of necessity."

South Carolina winds up a minute series of prohibitions by ordering all persons to apply themselves to the observance of the day by exercising themselves thereon in the duties of piety and true religion. It need hardly be said that these laws are practically obsolete, except so far as they forbid ordinary and unnecessary traffic and labour. To that extent they are supported by public sentiment, and are justified as being in the nature not so much of religious as of socially and economically useful regulations.

and more resembling what one finds in Germany or France. Nowhere however does one see the shops open or ordinary work done. On many railroads there are few Sunday trains, and museums are in many cities closed. But in two respects the practice is more lax than in Great Britain. Most of the leading newspapers publish Sunday editions, which contain a great deal of general readable matter, stories, gossip, and so forth, over and above the news of the day; and in the great cities theatres are now open on Sunday evenings.[1]

The interest in theological questions is less keen than it was in New England a century ago, but keener than it has generally been in England since the days of the Commonwealth. A great deal of the ordinary reading of the average family has a religious tinge, being supplied in religious or semi-religious weekly and monthly magazines. In many parts of the West the old problems of predestination, reprobation, and election continue to be discussed by farmers and shopkeepers in their leisure moments with the old eagerness, and give a sombre tinge to their views of religion. The ordinary man knows the Bible better, and takes up an allusion to it more quickly than the ordinary Englishman, though perhaps not better than the ordinary Scotchman. Indeed I may say once for all that the native American in everything concerning theology reminds one much more of Scotland than of England, although in the general cast and turn of his mind he is far more English than Scotch. It is hard to state any general view as to the substance of pulpit teaching, because the differences between different denominations are marked; but on the whole the tendency has been, alike among Congregationalists, Baptists, Northern Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, for sermons to be less metaphysical and less markedly doctrinal than formerly, and to become either expository or else of a practical and hortatory character. This is less the case among the Presbyterians of the South, who are more stringently orthodox, and in all respects more conservative than their brethren of the North. The discussion of the leading theological questions of the day, such as those of the authority of Scripture, the relation of natural science to the teachings of the Bible, the existence of rewards and punishments in a future state, goes on much as in England. Some of the leading reviews and magazines publish articles on these subjects, which are read more widely than corresponding articles in England, but do not, I think, absorb any more of the thought and attention of the average educated man and woman.

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[1] One hears that it is now becoming the custom to make a week's engagement of an operatic or theatrical company—there are many traversing the country—begin on Sunday instead of, as formerly, on Monday night.

Whether scepticism makes any sensible advance either in affecting a larger number of minds, or in cutting more deeply at the roots of their belief in God and immortality, is a question which it is to-day extremely difficult for any one to answer even as regards his own country. There are many phenomena in every part of Europe which appear to indicate that it does advance; there are others which point in the opposite direction. Much more difficult, then, must it be for a stranger to express a positive opinion as regards America on this gravest of all subjects of inquiry. The conditions of England and America appear to me very similar, and whatever tendency prevails in either country is likely to prevail in the other. The mental habits of the people are the same; their fundamental religious conceptions are the same, except that those who prize a visible Church and bow to her authority are relatively fewer among American Protestants; their theological literature is the same. In discussing a theological question with an American one never feels that slight difference of point of view, or, so to speak, of mental atmosphere, which is sure to crop up in talking to a Frenchman or an Italian, or even to a German. Considerations of speculative argument, considerations of religious feeling, affect the two nations in the same way: the course of their religious history is not likely to diverge. If there be a difference at all in their present attitude, it is perhaps to be found in this, that whereas Americans are more frequently disposed to treat minor issues in a bold and free spirit, they are more apt to recoil from blank negation. As an American once said to me—they are apt to put serious views into familiar words—"We don't mind going a good way along the plank, but we like to stop short of the jump-off."

Whether pronounced theological unbelief, which has latterly been preached by lectures and pamphlets with a freedom unknown even thirty years ago, has made substantial progress among the thinking part of the working class is a question on which one hears the most opposite statements. I have seen statistics which purport to show that the proportion of members of Christian churches to the total population has risen in the Protestant churches from 1 in 14½ in A.D. 1800 to 1 in 5 in A.D. 1880; and which estimate the number of communicants in 1880 at 12,000,000, the total adult population in that year being taken at 25,000,000. But one also hears many lamentations over the diminished attendance at city churches; and in ecclesiastical circles people say, just as they say in England, that the great problem is how to reach the masses. The most probable conclusion seems to be that while in cities like New York and Chicago the bulk of the humbler classes (except the Roman Catholics) are practically heathen to the same extent as in London, or Liverpool, or Berlin, the proportion of working men who belong to some religious body is rather larger in towns under 30,000 than it is in the similar towns of Great Britain or Germany.

In the cultivated circles of the great cities one finds a good many people, as one does in England, who have virtually abandoned Christianity; and in most of the smaller cities there is said to be a knot of men who profess agnosticism, and sometimes have a meeting-place where secularist lectures are delivered. Fifty years ago the former class would have been fewer and more reserved; the latter would scarcely have existed. But the relaxation of the old strictness of orthodoxy has not diminished the zeal of the various churches, nor their hold upon their adherents, nor their attachment to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

This zeal and attachment happily no longer show themselves in intolerance. Except in small places in the West or South, where aggressive scepticism would rouse displeasure and might affect a man's position in society, everybody is as free in America as in London to hold and express any views he pleases. Within the churches themselves there is an unmistakable tendency to loosen the bonds of subscription required from clergymen. Prosecutions for heresy of course come before church courts, since no civil court would take cognizance of such matters unless when invoked by some one alleging that a church court had given a decision, or a church authority had taken an executive step, which prejudiced him in some civil right, and was unjust because violating an obligation contracted with him.[1]

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[1] Including the case in which a church court had disregarded its own regulations, or acted in violation of the plain principles of judicial procedure.

Such prosecutions are not uncommon, but the sympathy of the public is usually with the accused minister, and the latitude allowed to divergence from the old standards becomes constantly greater. At present it is in the Congregationalist Church pretty much the same as in that church in England; in the Presbyterian Church of the North, and among Baptists and Methodists, about the same as in the unestablished Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. Speaking generally, no church allows quite so much latitude either in doctrine or in ritual as recent decisions of the courts of law, beginning from the "Essays and Reviews" case, have allowed to the clergy of the Anglican Establishment in England; but I could not gather that the clergy of the various Protestant bodies feel themselves fettered, or that the free development of religious thought is seriously checked, except in the South, where orthodoxy is rigid, and forbids a clergyman to hold Mr. Darwin's views regarding the descent of man. A pastor who begins to chafe under the formularies or liturgy of his denomination would be expected to leave the denomination and join some other in which he could feel more at home. He would not suffer socially by doing so, as an Anglican clergyman possibly might in the like case in England.

In what may be called the every-day religious life and usages of the United States, there are differences from those of England or Scotland which it is easy to feel but hard to define or describe. There is rather less conventionalism or constraint in speaking of religious experiences, less of a formal separation between the church and the world, less disposition to treat the clergy as a caste and expect them to conform to a standard not prescribed for the layman,[1] less reticence about sacred things, perhaps less sense of the refinement with which sacred things ought to be surrounded. The letting by auction of sittings in a popular church, though I think very rare, excites less disapproval than it would in Europe. Some fashionable churches are supplied with sofas, carpets, and the other comforts of a drawing-room: a well-trained choir is provided, and the congregation would not think of spoiling the performance by joining in the singing.

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[1] Although total abstinence is much more generally expected from a clergyman than it would be in Great Britain. In most denominations, including Baptists and Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, it is practically universal among the clergy.

The social side of church life is more fully developed than in Protestant Europe. A congregation, particularly among the Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists, is the centre of a group of societies, literary and recreative as well as religious and philanthropic, which not only stimulate charitable work, but bring the poorer and richer members into friendly relations with one another, and form a large part of the social enjoyments of the young people, keeping them out of harm's way, and giving them a means of forming acquaintances. Often a sort of informal evening party, called a "sociable," is given once a month, at which all ages and classes meet on an easy footing.[1] Religion seems to associate itself better with the interests of the young in America, and to have come within the last forty years to wear a less forbidding countenance than it has generally done in Britain, or at least among English Nonconformists and in the churches of Scotland.

A still more peculiar feature of the American churches is the propensity to what may be called Revivalism which some of them, and especially the Methodist churches, show. That exciting preaching and those external demonstrations of feeling which have occasionally appeared in Britain, have long been chronic there, appearing chiefly in the form of the camp-meeting, a gathering of people usually in the woods or on the sea-shore, where open-air preaching goes on perhaps for days together. One hears many stories about these camp-meetings, not always to their credit, which agree at least in this that they exercise a powerful even if transient influence upon the humbler classes who flock to them. In the West they have been serviceable in evangelizing districts where few regular churches had yet been established. In the East and South it is now chiefly among the humbler classes, and of course still more among the negroes, that they flourish. All denominations are more prone to emotionalism in religion, and have less reserve in displaying it, than in England or Scotland. I remember in 1870 to have been a passenger by one of the splendid steamers which ply along the Sound between New York and Fall River. A Unitarian Congress was being held in New York, and a company of New England Unitarians were going to attend it. Now New England Unitarians are of all Americans perhaps the most staid and sober in their thoughts and habits, the least inclined to a demonstrative expression of their faith. This company, however, installed itself round the piano in the great saloon of the vessel and sang hymns, hymns full of effusion, for nearly two hours, many of the other passengers joining, and all looking on with sympathy. Our English party assumed at first that the singers belonged to some Methodist body, in which case there would have been nothing to remark except the attitude of the bystanders. But they were Unitarians.

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[1] Even dances may be given, but not by all denominations. When some years ago a Presbyterian congregation in a great Western city was giving a "reception" in honour of the opening of its new Church Building—prosperous churches always have a building with a set of rooms for meetings—the sexton (as he is called in America), who had come from a Protestant Episcopal church in the East, observed, as he surveyed the spacious hall, "What a pity you are not Episcopalians; you might have given a ball in this room!"

European travellers have in one point greatly exaggerated the differences between their own continent and the United States. They have represented the latter as pre-eminently a land of strange sects and abnormal religious developments. Such sects and developments there certainly are, but they play no greater part in the whole life of the nation than similar sects do in Germany and England, far less than the various dissenting communities do in Russia. The Mormons have drawn the eyes of the world because they have attempted to form a sort of religious commonwealth, and have revived one ancient practice which modern ethics condemn. But the Mormon church is chiefly recruited from Europe: one finds few native Americans in Salt Lake City, and those few from among the poor whites of the South.[1] The Shakers are an interesting and well-conducted folk, but there are very few of them: and of the other communistic religious bodies one hears more in Europe than in America. Here and there some strange little sect emerges and lives for a few years;[2] but in a country seething with religious emotion, and whose conditions seem to tempt to new departures and experiments of all kinds, the philosophic traveller may rather wonder that men have stood so generally upon the old paths.

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[1] Some Southern States punish the preaching of Mormonism.

[2] Near Walla Walla in Washington Territory I came across a curious little sect formed by a Welshman who fell into trances and delivered revelations. He had two sons, and asserted one of them to be an incarnation of Christ, and the other of St. John Baptist, and gathered about fifty disciples, whom he endeavoured to form into a society having all things in common. However, both the children died; and in 1881 most of his disciples had deserted him. Probably such phenomena are not uncommon; there is a good deal of proneness to superstition among the less educated Westerns, especially the immigrants from Europe. They lead a solitary life in the midst of a vast nature.

We have already seen that Christianity has in the United States maintained, so far as externals go, its authority and dignity, planting its houses of worship all over the country and raising enormous revenues from its adherents. Such a position of apparent influence might, however, rest upon ancient habit and convention, and imply no dominion over the souls of men. The Roman Empire in the days of Augustus was covered from end to end with superb temples to many gods: the priests were numerous and wealthy, and enjoyed the protection of the State: processions retained their pomp, and sacrifices drew crowds of admiring worshippers. But the old religions had lost their hold on the belief of the educated and on the conscience of all classes. If therefore we desire to know what place Christianity really fills in America, and how far it gives stability to the commonwealth, we must inquire how far it governs the life and moulds the mind of the country.

Such an inquiry may address itself to two points. It may examine into the influence which religion has on the conduct of the people, on their moral standard and the way they conform themselves thereto. And it may ask how far religion touches and gilds the imagination of the people, redeeming their lives from commonness, and bathing their souls in "the light that never was on sea or land."

In works of active beneficence no country has surpassed, perhaps none has equalled, the United States. Not only are the sums collected for all sorts of philanthropic purposes larger relatively to the wealth of America than in any European country, but the amount of personal interest shown in good works and personal effort devoted to them seems to a European visitor to exceed what he knows at home. How much of this interest and effort would be given were no religious motive present it is impossible to say. Not all, but I think nearly all of it, is in fact given by religious people, and, as they themselves suppose, under a religious impulse. This religious impulse is less frequently than in England a sectarian impulse, for all Protestants, and to some extent Roman Catholics also, are wont to join hands for most works of benevolence.

The ethical standard of the average man is of course the Christian standard, modified to some slight extent by the circumstances of American life, which have been different from those of Protestant Europe. The average man has not thought of any other standard, and religious teaching, though it has become less definite and less dogmatic, is still to him the source whence he believes himself to have drawn his ideas of duty and conduct. In Puritan days there must have been some little conscious and much more unconscious hypocrisy, the profession of religion being universal, and the exactitude of practice required by opinion, and even by law, being above what ordinary human nature seems capable of attaining. The fault of antinomianism which used to be charged on high Calvinists is now sometimes charged on those who become, under the influence of revivals, extreme emotionalists in religion. But taking the native Americans as a whole, no people seems to-day less open to the charge of pharisaism or hypocrisy. They are perhaps rather more prone to the opposite error of good-natured indulgence to offences of which they are not themselves guilty.

That there is less crime among native Americans than among the foreign born is a point not to be greatly pressed, for it may be partly due to the fact that the latter are the poorer and more ignorant part of the population. If, however, we take matters which do not fall within the scope of penal law, the general impression of those who have lived long both in Protestant Europe and in America seems to be that as respects veracity, temperance, the purity of domestic life,[1] tenderness to children and the weak, and general kindliness of behaviour, the native Americans stand rather higher than either the English or the Germans.[2] And those whose opinion I am quoting seem generally, though not universally, disposed to think that the influence of religious belief, which may survive in its effect upon the character when a man has dropped his connection with any religious body, counts for a good deal in this, and is a more consciously present and active force than in the two countries I have referred to.

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[1] The great frequency of divorce in some States—there are spots where the proportion of divorces to marriages is 1 to 7—does not appear to betoken immorality, but to be due to the extreme facility with which the law allows one or both of a married pair to indulge their caprice. Divorce is said to be much less frequent in proportion among the middle and upper than among the humbler classes.

[2] This would not be said as regards commercial uprightness, in which respect the United States stand on no higher level than England and Germany, and possibly below France and Scandinavia.

If we ask how far religion exerts a stimulating influence on the thought and imagination of a nation, we are met by the difficulty of determining what is the condition of mankind where no such influence is present. There has never been a civilized nation without a religion, and though many highly civilized individual men live without it, they are so obviously the children of a state of sentiment and thought in which religion has been a powerful factor, that no one can conjecture what a race of men would be like who had during several generations believed themselves to be the highest beings in the universe, or at least entirely out of relation to any other higher beings, and to be therewithal destined to no kind of existence after death. Some may hold that respect for public opinion, sympathy, an interest in the future of mankind, would do for such a people what religion has done in the past; or that they might even be, as Lucretius expected, the happier for the extinction of possible supernatural terrors. Others may hold that life would seem narrow and insignificant, and that the wings of imagination would droop in a universe felt to be void. All that need be here said is that a people with comparatively little around it in the way of historic memories and associations to touch its emotion, a people whose energy is chiefly absorbed in commerce and the development of the material resources of its territory, a people consumed by a feverish activity that gives little opportunity for reflection or for the contemplation of nature, seems most of all to need to have its horizon widened, its sense of awe and mystery touched, by whatever calls it away from the busy world of sight and sound into the stillness of faith and meditation. A perusal of the literature which the ordinary American of the educated farming and working class reads, and a study of the kind of literature which those Americans who are least coloured by European influences produce, lead me to think that the Bible and Christian theology altogether do more in the way of forming the imaginative background to an average American view of the world of man and nature than they do in modern Protestant Europe.

No one is so thoughtless as not to sometimes ask himself what would befall mankind if the solid fabric of belief on which their morality has hitherto rested, or at least been deemed by them to rest, were suddenly to break up and vanish under the influence of new views of nature, as the ice-fields split and melt when they have floated down into a warmer sea. Morality with religion for its sanction has hitherto been the basis of social polity, except under military despotisms: would morality be so far weakened as to make social polity unstable? and if so, would a reign of violence return? In Europe this question does not seem urgent, because in Europe the physical force of armed men which maintains order is usually conspicuous, and because obedience to authority is everywhere in Europe matter of ancient habit, having come down little impaired from ages when men obeyed without asking for a reason. But in America, the whole system of government seems to rest not on armed force, but on the will of the numerical majority, a majority most of whom might well think that its overthrow would be for them a gain. So sometimes, standing in the midst of a great American city, and watching the throngs of eager figures streaming hither and thither, marking the sharp contrasts of poverty and wealth, an increasing mass of wretchedness and an increasing display of luxury, knowing that before long a hundred millions of men will be living between ocean and ocean under this one government—a government which their own hands have made, and which they feel to be the work of their own hands—one is startled by the thought of what might befall this huge yet delicate fabric of laws and commerce and social institutions were the foundations it has rested on to crumble away. Suppose that all these men ceased to believe that there was any power above them, any future before them, anything in heaven or earth but what their senses told them of; suppose that their consciousness of individual force and responsibility, already dwarfed by the overwhelming power of the multitude, and the fatalistic submission it engenders, were further weakened by the feeling that their swiftly fleeting life was rounded by a perpetual sleep—

> Soles occidere et redire possunt:
> Nobis, quum semel occidit brevis lux
> Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

Would the moral code stand unshaken, and with it the reverence for law, the sense of duty towards the community, and even towards the generations yet to come? Would men say "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"? Or would custom, and sympathy, and a perception of the advantages which stable government offers to the citizens as a whole, and which orderly self-restraint offers to each one, replace supernatural sanctions, and hold in check the violence of masses and the self-indulgent impulses of the individual? History, if she cannot give a complete answer to this question, tells us that hitherto civilized society has rested on religion, and that free government has prospered best among religious peoples.

America is no doubt the country in which intellectual movements work most swiftly upon the masses, and the country in which the loss of faith in the invisible might produce the completest revolution, because it is the country where men have been least wont to revere anything in the visible world. Yet America seems as unlikely to drift from her ancient moorings as any country of the Old World. It was religious zeal and the religious conscience which led to the founding of the New England colonies two centuries and a half ago—those colonies whose spirit has in such a large measure passed into the whole nation. Religion and conscience have been a constantly active force in the American commonwealth ever since, not indeed strong enough to avert many moral and political evils, yet at the worst times inspiring a minority with a courage and ardour by which moral and political evils have been held at bay, and in the long run generally overcome.

It is an old saying that monarchies live by honour and republics by virtue. The more democratic republics become, the more the masses grow conscious of their own power, the more do they need to live, not only by patriotism, but by reverence and self-control, and the more essential to their well-being are those sources whence reverence and self-control flow.

CHAPTER CIV

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

It has been well said that the position which women hold in a country is, if not a complete test, yet one of the best tests of the progress it has made in civilization. When one compares nomad man with settled man, heathen man with Christian man, the ancient world with the modern, the Eastern world with the Western, it is plain that in every case the advance in public order, in material comfort, in wealth, in decency and refinement of manners, among the whole population of a country—for in these matters one must not look merely at the upper class—has been accompanied by a greater respect for women, by a greater freedom accorded to them, by a fuller participation on their part in the best work of the world. Americans are fond of pointing, and can with perfect justice point, to the position their women hold as an evidence of the high level their civilization has reached. Certainly nothing in the country is more characteristic of the peculiar type their civilization has taken.

The subject may be regarded in so many aspects that it is convenient to take up each separately.

As respects the legal rights of women, these, of course, depend on the legislative enactments of each State of the Union, for in no case has the matter been left under the rigour of the common law. With much diversity in minor details, the general principles of the law are in all or nearly all the States similar. Women have been placed in an equality with men as respects all private rights. Married as well as unmarried women have long since obtained full control of their property, whether obtained by gift or descent, or by their own labour. This has been deemed so important a point that, instead of being left to ordinary legislation, it has in several States been directly enacted by the people in the Constitution. Women have in most, though perhaps not in all, States rights of guardianship over their children which the law of England denied to them till the Act of 1886. The law of divorce is in some States far from satisfactory, but it always aims at doing equal justice as between husbands and wives. Special protection as respects hours of labour is given to women by the laws of many States, and a good deal of recent legislation has been passed with intent to benefit them, though not always by well chosen means.

Women have made their way into most of the professions more largely than in Europe. In many of the Northern cities they practise as physicians, and seem to have found little or no prejudice to overcome. Medical schools have been provided for them in some universities. It was less easy to obtain admission to the bar, yet several have secured this, and the number seems to increase. They mostly devote themselves to the attorney's part of the work rather than to court practice. One edits, or lately edited, the *Illinois Law Journal* with great acceptance. Several have entered the Christian ministry, though, I think, only in what may be called the minor sects, not in any of the five or six great denominations, whose spirit is more conservative. Several have obtained success as professional lecturers. One hears little of them in engineering and in journalism. They are seldom to be seen in the offices of hotels, but many, more than in England, are employed as clerks or secretaries, both in some of the Government departments, and by telegraphic and other companies, as well as in publishing houses and other kinds of business where physical strength is not needed. They form an overwhelming majority of the teachers in public schools for boys as well as for girls, and are thought to be better teachers, at least for the younger sort, than men are.[1] No class prejudice forbids the daughters of clergymen or lawyers of the best standing to teach in elementary schools. Taking one thing with another, it is easier for women to find a career, to obtain remunerative work of an intellectual as of a commercial or mechanical kind, than in any part of Europe. Popular sentiment is entirely in favour of giving them every chance, as witness the new Constitutions of several Western States which expressly provide that they shall be equally admissible to all professions or employments. In no other country have women borne so conspicuous a part in the promotion of moral and philanthropic causes. They were among the earliest, most zealous, and most effective apostles of the anti-slavery movement. They have taken an equally active share in the temperance agitation. Not only has the Women's Christian Temperance Union with its numerous branches been the most powerful agency directed against the traffic in intoxicants, particularly in the Western States, but individual women have thrown themselves into the struggle with extraordinary zeal. Some years ago, during what was called the women's whisky war, they forced their way into the drinking saloons, bearded the dealers, adjured the tipplers to come out. At elections in which the Prohibitionist issue is prominent, ladies will sometimes assemble outside the polls and sing hymns at the voters. Their services in dealing with pauperism, with charities and reformatory institutions, have been inestimable. In New York some few years ago, when an Act was needed for improving the administration of the charities, it was a lady (belonging to one of the oldest and most respected families in the country) who went to Albany, and by placing the case forcibly before the State legislature there, succeeded in obtaining the required measure. The Charity Organization societies of the great cities are very largely managed by ladies; and the freedom they enjoy, coupled with a knowledge of business, less frequently found among European women, makes them invaluable agents in this work, which the growth of a pauper class renders daily more important. So too when it became necessary after the war to find teachers for the negroes in the institutions founded for their benefit in the South, it was chiefly Northern girls who volunteered for the duty, and discharged it with single-minded zeal.

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[1] The total number of teachers is given by the U.S. Bureau of Education Report for 1887 at 104,249 men and 191,439 women. As men are in a majority in the Southern States and in Indiana, the preponderance of women in the Northern States generally is very great.

American women take less part in politics than their English sisters do, although more than the women of Germany, France, or Italy. That they talk less about politics may be partly ascribed to the fact that politics come less into ordinary conversation in America (except during a presidential election) than in England. But the practice of canvassing at elections, recently developed by English ladies with eminent success, seems unknown. Ladies have never, I think, been chosen members of either Republican or Democratic conventions. However, at the National Convention of the Prohibitionist party at Pittsburg in

1884 a number of ladies presented credentials as delegates from local organizations, and were admitted to sit. One of the two secretaries of that Convention was a woman. Several were placed on the Committee of Credentials. Here we are on the debatable ground between pure party politics and philanthropic agitation. Women have been so effective in the latter that they cannot easily be excluded when persuasion passes into constitutional action, and one is not surprised to find the Prohibition party declare in their platform of 1884 that "they alone recognize the influence of woman, and offer to her equal rights with man in the management of national affairs." Presidential candidates have often "receptions" given in their honour by ladies, and some of the letters which, during the campaign of 1884, appeared in the newspapers in advocacy of one or other party, bore female signatures. One hears of attempts made to establish political "salons" at Washington, but neither there nor elsewhere has the influence of social gatherings attained the importance it has often possessed in France, though occasionally the wife of a politician makes his fortune by her tact and skill in winning support for him among professional politicians or the members of a State legislature. There is, however, another and less auspicious sphere of political action into which women have found their way at the national capital. The solicitation of members of a legislature with a view to the passing of bills, especially private bills, and to the obtaining of places, has become a profession there, and the persuasive assiduity which had long been recognized by poets as characteristic of the female sex, has made them widely employed and efficient in this work.

I have already, in treating of the women's suffrage movement (Chapter XCII.), referred to the various public offices which have been in many States thrown open to women. It is universally admitted that the gift of the suffrage must carry with it the right of obtaining any post in the service of the country for which votes are cast, up to and including the Presidency itself.

The subject of women's education opens up a large field. Want of space obliges me to omit a description, for which I have accumulated abundant materials, and to confine myself to a few concise remarks.

The public provision for the instruction of girls is quite as ample and adequate as that made for boys. Elementary schools are of course provided alike for both sexes, grammar schools and high schools are organized for the reception of girls sometimes under the same roof or even in the same classes, sometimes in a distinct building, but always, I think, with an equally complete staff of teachers and equipment of educational appliances. The great majority of the daughters of mercantile and professional men, especially of course in the West,[1] receive their education in these public secondary schools; and, what is more remarkable, the number of girls who continue their education in the higher branches, including the ancient classics and physical science, up to the age of seventeen or eighteen, is as large, in many places larger, than that of the boys, the latter being drafted off into practical life, while the former indulge their more lively interest in the things of the mind. One often hears it charged as a fault on the American system that its liberal provision of gratuitous instruction in the advanced subjects tends to raise girls of the humbler classes out of the sphere to which their pecuniary means would destine them, makes them discontented with their lot, implants tastes which fate will for ever forbid them to gratify.[2]

As stated in a previous chapter (Chapter CI.), University education is provided for women in the Eastern States by colleges expressly erected for their benefit, and in the Western States by State universities, whose regulations usually provide for the admission of female equally with male students to a gratuitous instruction in all subjects. There are also some colleges of private foundation which receive young men and maidens together, teaching them in the same classes, but providing separate buildings for their lodging.

I must not attempt to set forth and discuss the evidence regarding the working of this system of co-education, interesting as the facts are, but be content with stating the general result of the inquiries I made.

Co-education answers perfectly in institutions like Antioch and Oberlin in Ohio, where manners are plain and simple, where the students all come from a class in which the intercourse of young men and young women is easy and natural, and where there is a strong religious influence pervading the life of the place. No moral difficulties are found to arise. Each sex is said to improve the other: the men become more refined, the women more manly. Now and then students fall in love with one another, and marry when they have graduated. But why not? Such marriages are based upon a better reciprocal knowledge of character than is usually attainable in the great world, and are reported to be almost invariably happy. So also in the Western State universities co-education is well reported of. In these establishments the students mostly lodge where they will in the city, and are therefore brought into social relations only in the hours of public instruction; but the tendency of late years has been, while leaving men to find their own quarters, to provide places of residence for the women. The authorities have little to do in the way of discipline or supervision, and say they do not find it needed, and that they are not aware of any objections to the system. I did find, however, that the youths in some cases expressed aversion to it, saying they would rather be in classes by themselves; the reason apparently being that it was disagreeable to see a man whom men thought meanly of standing high in the favour of lady students. In these Western States there is so much freedom allowed in the intercourse of youths and girls, and girls are so well able to take care of themselves, that the objections which occur to a European arouse no disquietude. Whether a system which has borne good fruits in the primitive society of the West is fit to be adopted in the Eastern States, where the conditions of life approach nearer to those of Europe, is a question warmly debated in America. The need for it is at any rate not urgent, because the liberality of founders and benefactors has provided in at least four women's colleges places where an excellent education, surpassing that of most of the Western universities, stands open to women. These colleges are at present so efficient and popular, and the life of their students is in some respects so much freer than it could well be, considering the etiquette of Eastern society, in universities frequented by both sexes, that they will probably continue to satisfy the practical needs of the community and the wishes of all but the advocates of complete theoretical equality.

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[1] There are some private boarding schools and many private day schools for girls in the Eastern States. Comparatively few children are educated at home by governesses.

[2] A striking picture of such a case is given in a recent American tale called *The Breadwinners*.

It will be seen from what has been said that the provision for women's education in the United States is ampler and better than that made in any European countries, and that the making of it has been far more distinctly recognized as a matter of public concern. To these advantages, and to the spirit they proceed from, much of the influence which women exert must be ascribed. They feel more independent, they have a fuller consciousness of their place in the world of thought as well as in the world of action. The practice of educating the two sexes together in the same colleges tends, in those sections of the country where it prevails, in the same direction, placing women and men on a level as regards attainments, and giving them a greater number of common intellectual interests. It does not, I think, operate to make women either pedantic or masculine, or to diminish the differences between their mental and moral habits and those of men. Nature is quite strong enough to make the differences of temperament she creates persistent, even under influences which might seem likely to diminish them.

Custom allows to women a greater measure of freedom in doing what they will and going where they please than they have in any European country, except, perhaps, in Russia. No one is surprised to see a lady travel alone from the Atlantic to the Pacific, nor a girl of the richer class walking alone through the streets of a city. If a lady enters some occupation heretofore usually reserved to men, she is subject to much less censorious remark than would follow her in Europe, though in this matter the society of Eastern cities is hardly so liberal as that of the West.

Social intercourse between youths and maidens is everywhere more easy and unrestrained than in England or Germany, not to speak of France. Yet, there are considerable differences between the Eastern cities, whose usages have begun to approximate to those of Europe, and other parts of the country. In the rural districts, and generally all over the West, young men and girls are permitted to walk together, drive together, go out to parties, and even to public entertainments together, without the presence of any third person, who can be supposed to be looking after or taking charge of the girl. So a girl may, if she pleases, keep up a correspondence with a young man, nor will her parents think of interfering. She will have her own friends, who, when they call at her house, ask for her, and are received by her, it may be alone; because they are not deemed to be necessarily the friends of her parents also, nor even of her sisters. In the cities of the Atlantic States, it is beginning to be thought scarcely correct for a young man to take a young lady out for a solitary drive; and in few sets would he be now permitted to escort her alone to the theatre. But girls still go without chaperons to dances, the hostess being deemed to act as chaperon for all her guests; and as regards both correspondence and the right to have one's own circle of acquaintances, the usage even of New York or Boston allows more liberty than does that of London or Edinburgh. It was at one time, and it may possibly still be, not uncommon for a group of young people who know one another well to make up an autumn "party in the woods." They choose some mountain and forest region, such as the Adirondack Wilderness west of Lake Champlain, engage three or four guides, embark with guns and fishing rods, tents, blankets, and a stock of groceries, and pass in boats up the rivers and across the lakes of this wild country through sixty or seventy miles of trackless forest to their chosen camping ground at the foot of some tall rock that rises from the still crystal of the lake. Here they build their bark hut, and spread their beds of the elastic and fragrant hemlock boughs; the youths roam about during the day, tracking the deer, the girls read and work and bake the corn cakes; at night there is a merry gathering round the fire or a row in the soft moonlight. On these expeditions brothers will take their sisters and cousins, who bring perhaps some lady friends with them; the brothers' friends will come too; and all will live together in a fraternal way for weeks or months, though no elderly relative or married lady be of the party.

There can be no doubt that the pleasure of life is sensibly increased by the greater freedom which transatlantic custom permits; and as the Americans insist that no bad results have followed, one notes with regret that freedom declines in the places which deem themselves most civilized. American girls have been, so far as a stranger can ascertain, less disposed to what are called "fast ways" than girls of the corresponding classes in England,[1] and exercise in this respect a pretty rigorous censorship over one another. But when two young people find pleasure in one another's company, they can see as much of each other as they please, can talk and walk together frequently, can show that they are mutually interested, and yet need have little fear of being misunderstood either by one another or by the rest of the world. It is all a matter of custom. In the West custom sanctions this easy friendship; in the Atlantic cities so soon as people have come to find something exceptional in it, constraint is felt, and a conventional etiquette like that of the Old World begins to replace the innocent simplicity of the older time, the test of whose merit may be gathered from the universal persuasion in America that happy marriages are in the middle and upper ranks more common than in Europe, and that this is due to the ampler opportunities which young men and women have of learning one another's characters and habits before forming an engagement. Most girls have a larger range of intimate acquaintances than girls have in Europe, intercourse is franker, there is less difference between the manners of home and the manners of general society. The conclusions of a stranger are in such matters of no value, so I can only repeat that I have never met any judicious American lady who, however well she knew the Old World, did not think that the New World customs conduced more both to the pleasantness of life before marriage, and to constancy and concord after it.

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[1] Between fastness and freedom there is in American eyes all the difference in the world, but new-comers from Europe are startled. I remember to have once heard a German lady settled in a Western city characterize American women as "*furchtbar frei und furchtbar fromm*" (frightfully free and frightfully pious).

In no country are women, and especially young women, so much made of. The world is at their feet. Society seems organized for the purpose of providing enjoyment for them. Parents, uncles, aunts, elderly friends, even brothers, are ready to make their comfort and convenience bend to the girls' wishes. The wife has fewer opportunities for reigning over the world of amusements, because, except among the richest people, she has more to do in household management than in England, owing to the scarcity of servants. But she holds in her own house a more prominent, if not a more substantially powerful, position than in England or even in France. With the German *Hausfrau*, who is too often content to be a mere housewife, there is of course no comparison. The best proof of the superior place American ladies occupy is to be found in the notions they profess to entertain of the relations of an English married pair. They talk of the English wife as little better than a slave, declaring that when they stay with English friends, or receive an English couple in America, they see the wife always deferring to the husband and the husband always assuming that his pleasure and convenience are to prevail. The European wife, they admit, often gets her own way, but she gets it by tactful arts, by flattery or wheedling or playing on the man's weaknesses; whereas in America the husband's duty and desire is to gratify the wife and render to her those services which the English tyrant exacts from his consort.[1] One may often hear an American matron commiserate a friend who has married in Europe, while the daughters declare in chorus that they will never follow the example. Laughable as all this may seem to Englishwomen, it is perfectly true that the theory as well as the practice of conjugal life is not the same in America as in England. There are overbearing husbands in America, but they are more condemned by the opinion of the neighbourhood than in England. There are exacting wives in England, but their husbands are more pitied than would be the case in America. In neither country can one say that the principle of perfect equality reigns, for in America the balance inclines nearly though not quite as much in favour of the wife as it does in England in favour of the husband. No one man can have a sufficiently large acquaintance in both countries to entitle his individual opinion on the results to much weight. So far as I have been able to collect views from those observers who have lived in both countries, they are in favour of the American practice, perhaps because the theory it is based on departs less from pure equality than does that of England. These observers do not mean that the recognition of women as equals or superiors makes them any better or sweeter or wiser than Englishwomen; but rather that the principle of equality, by correcting the characteristic faults of men, and especially their selfishness and vanity, is more conducive to the concord and happiness of a home. They conceive that, to make the wife feel her independence and responsibility more strongly than she does in Europe, tends to brace and expand her character, while conjugal affection, usually stronger in her than in the husband, inasmuch as there are fewer competing interests, saves her from abusing the precedence yielded to her. This seems to be true, but I have heard others maintain that the American system, since it does not require the wife habitually to forego her own wishes, tends, if not to make her self-indulgent and capricious, yet slightly to impair the more delicate charms of character; as it is written, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

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[1] I have heard American ladies say, for instance, that they have observed that an Englishman who has forgotten his keys, sends his wife to the top of the house to fetch them; whereas an American would do the like errand for his wife, and never suffer her to do it for him.

A European cannot spend an evening in an American drawing-room without perceiving that the attitude of men to women is not that with which he is familiar at home. The average European man has usually a slight sense of condescension when he talks to a woman on serious subjects. Even if she is his superior in intellect, in character, in social rank, he thinks that as a man he is her superior, and consciously or unconsciously talks down to her. She is too much accustomed to this to resent it, unless it becomes tastelessly palpable. Such a notion does not cross an American's mind. He talks to a woman just as he would to a man, of course with more deference of manner, and with a proper regard to the topics likely to interest her, but giving her his intellectual best, addressing her as a person whose opinion is understood by both to be worth as much as his own. Similarly an American lady does not expect to have conversation made to her. It is just as much her duty or pleasure to lead it as the man's is, and more often than not she takes the burden from him, darting along with a gay vivacity which puts to shame his slower wits.

It need hardly be said that in all cases where the two sexes come into competition for comfort, the provision is made first for women. In railroads the end car of the train, being that farthest removed from the smoke of the locomotive, is reserved for them (though men accompanying a lady are allowed to enter it), and at hotels their sitting-room is the best and sometimes the only available public room, ladyless guests being driven to the bar or the hall. In omnibuses and horse-cars (tram-cars) it was formerly the custom for a gentleman to rise and offer his seat to a lady if there were no vacant place. This is now less universally done. In New York and Boston (and I think also in San Francisco), I have seen the men keep their seats when ladies entered; and I recollect one occasion when the offer of a seat to a lady was declined by her, on the ground that as she had chosen to enter a full car she ought to take the consequences. It was (I was told in Boston) a feeling of this kind that had led to the discontinuance of the old courtesy. When ladies constantly pressed into the already crowded vehicles, the men, who could not secure the enforcement of the regulations against overcrowding, tried to protect themselves by refusing to rise. It is sometimes said that the privileges yielded to American women have disposed them to claim as a right what was only a courtesy, and have told unfavourably upon their manners. I know of several instances, besides this one of the horse-cars, which might seem to support the criticism, but cannot on the whole think it well founded. The better bred women do not presume on their sex; and the area of good breeding is always widening. It need hardly be said that the community at large gains by the softening and restraining influence which the reverence for womanhood diffuses. Nothing so quickly incenses the people as any insult offered to a woman. Wife-beating, and indeed any kind of rough violence offered to women, is far less common among the rudest class than it is in England. Field work or work at the pit-mouth of mines is seldom or never done by women in America; and the American traveller who in some parts of Europe finds women performing severe manual labour is revolted by the sight in a way which Europeans find surprising.

In the farther West, that is to say, beyond the Mississippi, in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific States, one is much struck by what seems the absence of the humblest class of women. The trains are full of poorly-dressed and sometimes (though less frequently) rough-mannered men. One discovers no women whose dress or air marks them out as the wives, daughters, or sisters of these men, and wonders whether the male population is celibate, and if so, why there are so many women. Closer observation shows that the wives, daughters, and sisters are there, only their attire and manner are those of what Europeans would call middle class and not working class people. This is partly due to the fact that Western men affect a rough dress. Still one may say that the remark so often made that the masses of the American people correspond to the middle class of Europe is more true of the women than of the men, and is more true of them in the rural districts and in the West than it is of the inhabitants of Atlantic cities. I remember to have been dawdling in a book store in a small town in Oregon when a lady entered to inquire if a monthly magazine, whose name was unknown to me, had yet arrived. When she was gone I asked the salesman who she was, and what was the periodical she wanted. He answered that she was the wife of a railway workman, that the magazine was a journal of fashions, and that the demand for such journals was large and constant among women of the wage-earning class in the town. This set me to observing female dress more closely, and it turned out to be perfectly true that the women in these little towns were following the Parisian fashions very closely, and were, in fact, ahead of the majority of English ladies belonging to the professional and mercantile classes.[1] Of course in such a town as I refer to there are no domestic servants except in the hotels (indeed, almost the only domestic service to be had in the Pacific States is that of Chinese), so these votaries of fashion did all their own housework and looked after their own babies.

Three causes combine to create among American women an average of literary taste and influence higher than that of women in any European country. These are, the educational facilities they enjoy, the recognition of the equality of the sexes in the whole social and intellectual sphere, and the leisure which they possess as compared with men. In a country where men are incessantly occupied at their business or profession, the function of keeping up the level of culture devolves upon women. It is safe in their hands. They are quick and keen witted, less fond of open-air life and physical exertion than Englishwomen are, and obliged by the climate to pass a greater part of their time under shelter from the cold of winter and the sun of summer. For music and for the pictorial arts they do not yet seem to have formed so strong a taste as for literature, partly perhaps owing to the fact that in America the opportunities of seeing and hearing masterpieces, except indeed operas, are rarer than in Europe. But they are eager and assiduous readers of all such books and periodicals as do not presuppose special knowledge in some branch of science or learning, while the number who have devoted themselves to some special study and attained proficiency in it is large. The fondness for sentiment, especially moral and domestic sentiment, which is often observed as characterizing American taste in literature, seems to be mainly due to the influence of women, for they form not only the larger part of the reading public, but an independent-minded part, not disposed to adopt the canons laid down by men, and their preferences count for more in the opinions and predilections of the whole nation than is the case in England. Similarly the number of women who write is infinitely larger in America than in Europe. Fiction, essays, and poetry are naturally their favourite provinces. In poetry more particularly, many whose names are quite unknown in Europe have attained widespread fame.

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[1] The above, of course, does not apply to the latest immigrants from Europe, who are still European in their dress and ways, though in a town they become quickly Americanized.

Some one may ask how far the differences between the position of women in America and their position in Europe are due to democracy? or if not to this, then to what other cause?

They are due to democratic feeling in so far as they spring from the notion that all men are free and equal, possessed of certain inalienable rights, and owing certain corresponding duties. This root idea of democracy cannot stop at defining men as male human beings, any more than it could ultimately stop at defining them as white human beings. For many years the Americans believed in equality with the pride of discoverers as well as with the fervour of apostles. Accustomed to apply it to all sorts and conditions of men, they were naturally the first to apply it to women also; not, indeed, as respects politics, but in all the social as well as legal relations of life. Democracy is in America more respectful of the individual, less disposed to infringe his freedom or subject him to any sort of legal or family control, than it has shown itself in Continental Europe, and this regard for the individual enured to the benefit of women. Of the other causes that have worked in the same direction two may be mentioned. One is the usage of the Congregationalist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches, under which a woman who is a member of the congregation has the same rights in choosing a deacon, elder, or pastor, as a man has. Another is the fact that among the westward-moving settlers women were at first few in number, and were therefore treated with special respect. The habit then formed was retained as the communities grew, and propagated itself all over the country.

What have been the results on the character and usefulness of women themselves?

Favourable. They have opened to them a wider life and more variety of career. While the special graces of the feminine character do not appear to have suffered, there has been produced a sort of independence and a capacity for self-help which are increasingly valuable as the number of unmarried women increases. More resources are open to an American woman who has to lead a solitary life, not merely in the way of employment, but for the occupation of her mind and tastes, than to a European spinster or widow; while her education has not rendered the American wife less competent for the discharge of household duties.

How has the nation at large been affected by the development of this new type of womanhood, or rather perhaps of this variation on the English type?

If women have on the whole gained, it is clear that the nation gains through them. As mothers they mould the character of their children; while the function of forming the habits of society and determining its moral tone rests greatly in their hands. But there is reason to think that the influence of the American system tells directly for good upon men as well as upon the whole community. Men gain in being brought to treat women as equals rather than as graceful playthings or useful drudges. The respect for women which every American man either feels or is obliged by public sentiment to profess, has a wholesome effect on his conduct and character, and serves to check the cynicism which some other peculiarities of the country foster. The nation as a whole owes to the active benevolence of its women, and their zeal in promoting social reforms, benefits which the customs of Continental Europe would scarcely have permitted women to confer. Europeans have of late years begun to render a well-deserved admiration to the brightness and vivacity of American ladies. Those who know the work they have done and are doing in many a noble cause will admire still more their energy, their courage, their self-devotion. No country seems to owe more to its women than America does, nor to owe to them so much of what is best in social institutions and in the beliefs that govern conduct.

CHAPTER CV

EQUALITY

THE United States are deemed all the world over to be preeminently the land of equality. This was the first feature which struck Europeans when they began, after the peace of 1815 had left them time to look beyond the Atlantic, to feel curious about the phenomena of a new society. This was the great theme of De Tocqueville's description, and the starting-point of his speculations; this has been the most constant boast of the Americans themselves, who have believed their liberty more complete than that of any other people, because equality has been more fully blended with it. Yet some philosophers say that equality is impossible, and others, who express themselves more precisely, insist that distinctions of rank are so inevitable, that however you try to expunge them, they are sure to reappear. Before we discuss this question, let us see in what senses the word is used.

First there is legal equality, including both what one may call passive or private equality, *i.e.* the equal possession of civil private rights by all inhabitants, and active or public equality, the equal possession by all of rights to a share in the government, such as the electoral franchise and eligibility to public office. Both kinds of political equality exist in America, in the amplest measure, and may be dismissed from the present discussion.

Next there is the equality of material conditions, that is of wealth, and all that wealth gives; there is the equality of education and intelligence; there is the equality of social status or rank; and there is (what comes near to, but is not exactly the same as, this last) the equality of estimation, *i.e.* of the value which men set upon one another, whatever be the elements that come into this value, whether wealth, or education, or official rank, or social rank, or any other species of excellence. In how many and which of these senses of the word does equality exist in the United States?

Clearly not as regards material conditions. Sixty years ago there were no great fortunes in America, few large fortunes, no poverty. Now there is some poverty (though only in a few places can it be called pauperism), many large fortunes, and a greater number of gigantic fortunes than in any other country of the world. The class of persons who are passably well off but not rich, a class corresponding in point of income to the lower middle class of England or France, but superior in manners, is much larger than in the great countries of Europe. Between the houses, the dress, and the way of life of these persons, and those of the richer sort, there is less difference than in Europe. The very rich do not (except in a few places) make an ostentatious display of their wealth, because they have no means of doing so, and a visitor is therefore apt to overrate the extent to which equality of wealth, and of material conditions generally, still prevails. The most remarkable phenomenon of the last twenty-five years has been the appearance, not only of those few colossal millionaires who fill the public eye, but of many millionaires of the second order, men with fortunes ranging from $5,000,000 to $15,000,000. At a seaside resort like Newport, where one sees the finished luxury of the villas, and counts the well-appointed equipages, with their superb horses, which turn out in the afternoon, one gets some impression of the vast and growing wealth of the Eastern cities. But through the country generally there is little to mark out the man with an income of £20,000 a year from the man of £1000, as he is marked out in England by his country house with its park, or in France by the opportunities for display which Paris affords. The number of these fortunes seems likely to go on increasing, for they are due not merely to the sudden development of the West, with the chances of making vast sums by land speculation or in railway construction, but to the field for doing business on a great scale, which the size of the country presents. Where a merchant or manufacturer in France or England could realize thousands, an American, operating more boldly, and on this far wider theatre, may realize tens of thousands. We may therefore expect these inequalities of wealth to grow; nor will even the habit of equal division among children keep them down, for families are often small, and though some of those who inherit wealth may renounce business, others will pursue it, since the attractions of other kinds of life are fewer than in Europe. Politics are less exciting, there is no great land-holding class with the duties towards tenants and neighbours which an English squire may, if he pleases, usefully discharge; the pursuit of collecting pictures or other objects of curiosity implies frequent visits to Europe, and although the killing of birds prevails in the middle States and the killing of deer in the West, this rather barbarous form of pleasure is likely in time to die out from a civilized people. Other kinds of what is called "sport" no doubt remain, such as horse-racing, eagerly pursued in the form of trotting matches,[1] and the manlier amusements of yacht-racing, rowing, and baseball, but these can only be followed during part of the year, and some of them only by the young. A life of so-called pleasure is certainly harder to follow in an American city than in Paris or Vienna or London. Accordingly, while great fortunes will continue to be made, they will be less easily and quickly spent than in Europe, and one may surmise that the equality of material conditions, almost universal in last century, still general sixty years ago, will more and more diminish by the growth of a very rich class at one end of the line, and of a very poor class at the other end.

As respects education, the profusion of superior as well as elementary schools tends to raise the mass to a somewhat higher point than in Europe, while the stimulus of life being keener and the habit of reading more general, the number of persons one finds on the same general level of brightness, keenness, and a superficially competent knowledge of common facts, whether in science, history, geography, or literature, is extremely large. This general level tends to rise. But the level of exceptional attainment in that small but increasing class who have studied at the best native universities or in Europe, and who pursue learning and science either as a profession or as a source of pleasure, rises faster than does the general level of the multitude, so that in this regard also it appears that equality has diminished and will diminish further.

So far we have been on comparatively smooth and easy ground. Equality of wealth is a concrete thing; equality of intellectual possession and resource is a thing which can be perceived and gauged. Of social equality, of distinctions of standing and estimation in private life, it is far more difficult to speak, and in what follows I speak with some hesitation.

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[1] The trotting horse is driven, not ridden, a return to the earliest forms of horse-racing we know of.

One thing, and perhaps one thing only, may be asserted with confidence. There is no rank in America, that is to say, no external and recognized stamp, marking one man as entitled to any social privileges, or to deference and respect from others. No man is entitled to think himself better than his fellows, or to expect any exceptional consideration to be shown by them to him. There is no such thing as a recognized order of precedence, either on public occasions or at a private party, except that yielded to a few official persons, such as the governor and chief judges of a State within that State, as well as to the President and Vice-President, the Speaker of the House, the Federal senators, the judges of the Supreme Federal Court, and the members of the President's cabinet everywhere through the Union. In fact, the idea of a regular "rule of precedence" displeases the Americans,[1] and one finds them slow to believe that the existence of such a rule in England entitling the youthful daughter of a baronet, for instance, to go first out of the room at a dinner party on the host's arm, although there may be present married ladies both older and of some personal distinction, is not felt as a mortification by the latter ladies, because it is a mere matter of convention and usage which does not prevent the other guests from respecting these wives of ordinary commoners much more than they may respect the baronet's daughter. That an obscure earl should take precedence of a prime minister who happens to be a commoner shocks Americans out of measure.

What then is the effect or influence for social purposes of such distinctions as do exist between men, distinctions of birth, of wealth, of official position, of intellectual eminence?

. To be sprung from an ancient stock, or from a stock which can count persons of eminence among its ancestors, is of course a satisfaction to the man himself. There is at present almost a passion among Americans for genealogical researches. A good many families can trace themselves back to English families of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and of course a great many more profess to do so. For a man's ancestors to have come over in the *Mayflower* is in America much what their having come over with William the Conqueror used to be in England. The descendants of any of the revolutionary heroes, such as John Adams, Edmund Randolph, Alexander Hamilton, and the descendants of any famous man of colonial times, such as the early governors of Massachusetts from William Endicott downwards, or of Jonathan Edwards, or of Eliot the apostle of the Indians, are regarded by their neighbours with a certain amount of interest, and their legitimate pride in such an ancestry excites no disapproval.[1] In the Eastern cities, and at watering-places like Newport, one begins to see carriages with armorial bearings on their panels, but most people appear to disapprove or ridicule this as a piece of Anglomania, more likely to be practised by a *parvenu* than by the scion of a really old family. Virginians used to set much store by their pedigrees, and the letters F.F.V. (First Families of Virginia) had become a sort of jest against persons pluming themselves on their social position in the Old Dominion.[2] Since the war, however, which has shattered old Virginian society from its foundations, one hears little of such pretensions.[3]

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[1] In private parties, so far as there is any rule of precedence, it is that of age, with a tendency to make an exception in favour of clergymen or of any person of special eminence. It is only in Washington, where senators, judges, ministers, and congressmen are sensitive on these points, that such questions seem to arise, or to be regarded as deserving the attention of a rational mind.

The fault which Americans are most frequently accused of is the worship of wealth. The amazing fuss which is made about very rich men, the descriptions of their doings, the speculation as to their intentions, the gossip about their private life, lend colour to the reproach. He who builds up a huge fortune, especially if he does it suddenly, is no doubt a sort of hero, because an enormous number of men have the same ambition. Having done best what millions are trying to do, he is discussed, admired, and envied in the same way as the captain of a cricket eleven is at a large school, or the stroke of the university boat at Oxford or Cambridge. If he be a great financier, or the owner of a great railroad or a great newspaper, he exercises vast power, and is therefore well worth courting by those who desire his help or would avert his enmity. Admitting all this, it may seem a paradox to observe that a millionaire has a better and easier social career open to him in England than in America. Nevertheless there is a sense in which this is true. In America, if his private character be bad, if he be mean, or openly immoral, or personally vulgar, or dishonest, the best society will keep its doors closed against him. In England great wealth, skilfully employed, will more readily force these doors to open. For in England great wealth can, by using the appropriate methods, practically buy rank from those who bestow it; or by obliging persons whose position enables them to command fashionable society, can induce them to stand sponsors for the upstart, and force him into society, a thing which no person in America has the power of doing. To effect such a stroke in England the rich man must of course have stopped short of positive frauds, that is, of such frauds as could be proved in court. But he may be still distrusted and disliked by the *élite* of the commercial world, he may be vulgar and ill-educated, and indeed have nothing to recommend him except his wealth and his willingness to spend it in providing amusement for fashionable people. All this will not prevent him from becoming a baronet, or possibly a peer, and thereby acquiring a position of assured dignity which he can transmit to his offspring. The existence of a system of artificial rank enables a stamp to be given to base metal in Europe which cannot be given in a thoroughly republican country.[1] The feeling of the American public towards the very rich is, so far as a stranger can judge, one of curiosity and wonder rather than of respect. There is less snobbishness shown towards them than in England. They are admired as a famous runner or a jockey is admired, but do not seem to receive either flattery or social deference. When a man has won great wealth by the display of remarkable talents, as is the case with some of the manufacturers and railroad kings, the case is rather different, for it is felt that his gifts are a credit to the nation.

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[1] In all the cases mentioned in the text I remember to have been told by others, but never by the persons concerned, of the ancestry. This is an illustration of the fact that while such ancestry is felt to be a distinction it would be thought bad taste for those who possess it to mention it unless they were asked.

[2] An anecdote is told of the captain of a steamer plying at a ferry from Maryland into Virginia, who being asked by a needy Virginian to give him a free passage across, inquired if the applicant belonged to one of the F.F.V. "No," answered the man, "I can't exactly say that; rather to one of the second families." "Jump on board," said the captain; "I never met one of your sort before."

[3] A few years ago a club was formed in New York to include only persons who could prove that their progenitors were settled in the State before the Revolution, and I daresay clubs exist elsewhere making similar claims to exclusiveness.

The persons to whom official rank gives importance are very few indeed, being for the nation at large only about one hundred persons at the top of the Federal Government, and in each State less than a dozen of its highest State functionaries. For these State functionaries, indeed, the respect shown is extremely scanty, and much more official than personal. A high Federal officer, a senator, or justice of the supreme court, or cabinet minister, is conspicuous while he holds his place, and is of course a personage in any private society he may enter; but less so than a corresponding official would be in Europe. A simple member of the House of Representatives is nobody. Even men of the highest official rank do not give themselves airs on the score of their position. Some years ago, being in Washington, I was taken by a friend to be presented to the Commander-in-chief of the United States army, a great soldier whose fame all the world knows. We found him standing at a desk in a bare room in the War Department, at work with one clerk. While he was talking to us the door of the room was pushed open, and there appeared the figure of a Western tourist belonging to what Europeans would call the lower middle class, followed by his wife and sister, who were "doing" Washington. Perceiving that the room was occupied they began to retreat, but the Commander-in-chief called them back. "Walk in, ladies," he said. "You can look around. You won't disturb me; make yourselves at home."

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[1] The English system of hereditary titles tends to maintain the distinction of ancient lineage far less perfectly than that simple use of a family name which prevailed in Italy during the Middle Ages, or in ancient Rome. A Colonna or a Doria, like a Cornelius or a Valerius, carried the glory of his nobility in his name whereas any upstart may be created a duke.

Intellectual attainment does not excite much notice till it becomes eminent, that is to say, till it either places its possessor in a conspicuous position, such as that of president of one of the greatest universities, or till it has made him well known to the world as a preacher, or writer, or scientific discoverer. When this kind of eminence has been reached, it receives, I think, more respect than anywhere in Europe, except possibly in Italy, where the interest in learned men, or poets, or artists, seems to be greater than anywhere else in Europe.[1] A famous writer or divine is known by name to a far greater number of persons in America than would know a similar person in any European country. He is one of the glories of the country. There is no artificial rank to cast him into the shade. He is possibly less famous than the railroad kings or manipulators of the stock markets; but he excites a different kind of sentiment; and people are willing to honour him in a way, sometimes distasteful to himself, which would not be applied to the millionaire except by those who sought to gain something from him.

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[1] In Germany great respect is no doubt felt for the leaders of learning and science; but they are regarded as belonging to a world of their own, separated by a wide gulf from the territorial aristocracy, which still deems itself (as in the days of Candide) a different form of mankind from those who have not sixteen quarterings to show.

Perhaps the best way of explaining how some of the differences above mentioned, in wealth or official position or intellectual eminence, affect social equality is by reverting to what was called, a few pages back, equality of estimation—the idea which men form of other men as compared with themselves. It is in this that the real sense of equality comes out. In America men hold others to be at bottom exactly the same as themselves. If a man is enormously rich, like A. T. Stewart or William H. Vanderbilt, or if he is a great orator, like Daniel Webster or Henry Ward Beecher, or a great soldier like Ulysses S. Grant, or a great writer like R. W. Emerson, or President, so much the better for him. He is an object of interest, perhaps of admiration, possibly even of reverence. But he is deemed to be still of the same flesh and blood as other men. The admiration felt for him may be a reason for going to see him and longing to shake hands with him. But it is not a reason for bowing down to him, or addressing him in deferential terms, or treating him as if he was porcelain and yourself only earthenware.[1] In this respect there is, I think, a difference, slight but perceptible, between the sentiment of equality as it exists in the United States, and as one finds it in France and Switzerland, the countries of the Old World where (if we except Norway, which has never had an aristocracy) social equality has made the greatest progress. In France and Switzerland there lingers a kind of feeling as if the old *noblesse* were not quite like other men. The Swiss peasant, with all his manly independence, has in many cantons a touch of instinctive reverence for the old families; or perhaps, in some other cantons, a touch of jealousy which makes him desire to exclude their members from office, because he feels that they still think themselves better than he is. Nothing like this is possible in America, where the very notion of such distinctions excites a wondering curiosity as to what sort of creature the titled noble of Europe can be.

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[1] This is seen even in the manner of American servants. Although there is an aversion among native Americans to enter domestic service, the temporary discharge of such duties does not necessarily involve any loss of caste. Eighteen years ago I remember to have found all the waiting in a large hotel in the White Mountains done by the daughters of respectable New England farmers in the low country who had come up for their summer change of air to this place of resort, and were earning their board and lodging by acting as waitresses. They were treated by the guests as equals, and were indeed cultivated and well mannered young women.

The total absence of rank and the universal acceptance of equality do not however prevent the existence of grades and distinctions in society which, though they may find no tangible expression, are sometimes as sharply drawn as in Europe. Except in the newer parts of the West, those who deem themselves ladies and gentlemen draw just the same line between themselves and the multitude as is drawn in England, and draw it in much the same way. The nature of a man's occupation, his education, his manners and breeding,[1] his income, his connections, all come into view in determining whether he is in this narrow sense of the word "a gentleman," almost as they would in England, though in most parts of the United States personal qualities count for rather more than in England, and occupation for rather less. The word is equally indefinable in both countries, but in America the expression "not quite a lady" seems to be less frequently employed. One is told, however, that the son of cultivated parents would not like to enter a retail store: and even in a Western city like Detroit the best people will say of a party that it was "very mixed." In some of the older cities society is as exclusive as in the more old-fashioned English counties, the "best set" considering itself very select indeed. In such a city I remember to have heard a family belonging to the best set, which is mostly to be found in a particular quarter of the city. speak of the inhabitants of a handsome suburb two miles away just as Belgravians might speak of Islington; and the son of the family who, having made in Europe the acquaintance of some of the dwellers in this suburb, had gone to a ball there, was questioned by his sisters about their manners and customs much as if he had returned from visiting a tribe in Central Africa. On inquiry I discovered that these North Shore people were as rich and doubtless thought themselves as cultivated as the people of my friend's quarter. But all the city knew that the latter were the "best set." One is told that this exclusiveness spreads steadily from East to West, and that before long there will be such sets in all the greater cities.

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[1] On the New York elevated railroad smoking is not permitted in any car. When I asked a conductor how he was able to enforce this rule, considering that on every other railway smoking was practised, he answered, "I always say when any one seems disposed to insist, 'Sir, I am sure that if you are a gentleman you will not wish to bring me into a difficulty,' and then they always leave off."

Europeans have been known to ask whether the United States do not suffer from the absence of a hereditary nobility. As may be supposed, such a question excites mirth in America: it is as if you were to offer them a Court and an Established Church. They remark, with truth, that since Pitt in England and the Napoleons in France prostituted hereditary titles, these have ceased to be either respectable or useful. "They do not," say the Americans, "suggest antiquity, for the English families that enjoy them are mostly new; they are not associated, like the ancient titles, with the history of your nation; they are merely a prize offered to wealth, the expression of a desire for gilding that plutocracy which has replaced the ancient aristocracy of your country. Seeing how little service hereditary nobility renders in maintaining the standard either of manners, or morals,[1] or honour, or public duty, few sensible men would create it in any European country where it did not exist; much less then should we dream of creating it in America, which possesses none of the materials or conditions which could make it tolerable. If a peerage is purchaseable even in England, where the dignity of the older nobility might have suggested some care in bestowal, purchaseable not so openly as in Portugal or a German principality, but practically purchaseable by party services and by large subscriptions to public purposes, much more would it be purchaseable here, where there are no traditions to break down, where wealth accumulates rapidly, and the wealthy seek every avenue for display. Titles in this country would be simply an additional prize offered to wealth and ambition. They could not be respected. They would make us as snobbish as you are. They would be an unmixed evil." A European observer will not quarrel with this judgment. There is already a disposition in America, as everywhere else, to relish and make the most of such professional or official titles as can be had; it is a harmless way of trying to relieve the monotony of the world. If there be, as no doubt there is, less disposition than in England to run after and pay court to the great or the fashionable, this is perhaps due not to any superior virtue, but to the absence of those opportunities and temptations which their hereditary titles and other social institutions set before the English. It would be the very wantonness of folly to create in the new country what most thinking people would gladly be rid of in the old one.

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[1] The moral and social standard which American society enforces is in some respects more exacting than that of England. I have frequently heard Americans express surprise at the reception accorded by fashionable London to Americans whom they held cheap, or to persons, whether English or foreign, whose transgressions had become matter of notoriety.

Another question is more serious and less easily answered. What is the effect of social equality upon manners? Many causes go to the making of manners, as one may see by noting how much better they are in some parts of Europe than in other parts where nevertheless the structure of society is equally aristocratic, or democratic, as the case may be. One must therefore be careful not to ascribe to this source only such peculiarities as America shows. On the whole, bearing in mind that the English race has less than some other races of that quickness of perception and sympathy which goes far to make manners good, the Americans have gained more than they have lost by equality. I do not think that the upper class loses in grace, I am sure that the humbler class gains in independence. The manners of the "best people" are exactly those of England, with a thought more of consideration towards inferiors and of frankness towards equals. Among the masses there is, generally speaking,[1] as much real courtesy and good nature as anywhere else in the world. There is less outward politeness than in some parts of Europe, Portugal for instance, or Tuscany, or Sweden. There is a certain coolness or off-handness which at first annoys the European visitor, who still thinks himself "a superior"; but when he perceives that it is not meant for insolence, and that native Americans do not notice it, he learns to acquiesce. Perhaps the worst manners are those of persons drest in some rag of authority. The railroad car-conductor has a bad name; but personally I have always been well treated by him, and remember with pleasure one on a Southern railroad (an ex-Confederate soldier) who did the honours of his car with a dignified courtesy worthy of those Hungarian nobles who are said to have the best manners in Europe. The hotel clerk is supercilious, but if one frankly admits his superiority, his patronage becomes friendly, and he may even condescend to interest himself in making your stay in the city agreeable. One finds most courtesy among the rural population of New England and the Middle States, least among the recent immigrants in the cities and the unsettled population of the West. However, the most material point to remark is the improvement of recent years. The concurrent testimony of European travellers, including both admirers and detractors of democracy, proves that manners must have been disagreeable forty years ago, and one finds nowadays an equally general admission that the Americans are as pleasant to one another and to strangers as are the French or the Germans or the English. The least agreeable feature to the visitors of former years, an incessant vaunting of their own country and disparagement of others, has disappeared, and the tinge of self-assertion which the sense of equality used to give is now but faintly noticeable.

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[1] There are parts of the West which still lack polish; and the behaviour of the whites to the Chinese often incenses a stranger from the Atlantic States or Europe. I remember in Oregon to have seen a huge navvy turn an inoffensive Chinaman out of his seat in a railway car, and when I went to the conductor and endeavoured to invoke his interference, he calmly remarked, "Yes, I know those things do make the English mad." On the other hand on the Pacific slope coloured people often sit down to table with whites.

CHAPTER CVI

THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRACY ON THOUGHT

TWO opposite theories regarding the influence of democratic institutions on intellectual activity have found currency. One theory extols them because they stimulate the mind of a people, not only sharpening men's wits by continual struggle and unrest, but giving to each citizen a sense of his own powers and duties in the world, which spurs him on to exertions in ever-widening fields. This theory is commonly applied to Athens and other democracies of the ancient world, as contrasted with Sparta and the oligarchic cities, whose intellectual production was scanty or altogether wanting. It compares the Rome of Cicero, Lucretius, and Catullus, and the Augustan age, whose great figures were born under the Republic, with the vaster but comparatively sterile Roman world of Marcus Aurelius or Constantine, when freedom had long since vanished. It notes the outburst of literary and artistic splendour that fell in the later age of the republics of mediæval Italy, and dwells with especial pleasure on the achievements of Florence, the longest-lived and the most glorious of the free commonwealths of Italy.

According to the other theory, Democracy is the child of ignorance, the parent of dulness and conceit. The opinion of the greatest number being the universal standard, everything is reduced to the level of vulgar minds. Originality is stunted, variety disappears, no man thinks for himself, or, if he does, fears to express what he thinks. A drear pall of monotony covers the sky.

> "Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the curtain fall
> And universal darkness buries all."

This doctrine seems to date from the appearance of De Tocqueville's book, though his professed disciples have pushed it much further than his words warrant. It is really an *a priori* doctrine, drawn from imagining what the consequences of a complete equality of material conditions and political powers ought to be. But it claims to rest upon the observed phenomena of the United States, which, thirty years ago, were still the only great modern democracy; and it was with reference to the United States that it was enunciated by Mr. Robert Lowe in one of those speeches of 1866 which so greatly impressed his contemporaries.

Both these theories will be found on examination to be baseless. Both, so far as they are *a priori* theories, are fanciful; both, in so far as they purport to rest upon the facts of history, err by regarding one set of facts only, and ignoring a great number of concomitant conditions which have probably more to do with the result than the few conditions which have been arbitrarily taken to be sufficient causes. None of the Greek republics was a democracy in the modern sense, for all rested upon slavery; nor, indeed, can the name be applied, except at passing moments, to the Italian cities. Many circumstances besides their popular government combined to place the imperishable crown of literary and artistic glory upon the brows of the city of the Violet and the city of the Lily. So also the view that a democratic land is necessarily a land of barren monotony, while unsound even as a deduction from general principles, is still more unsound in its assumption of certain phenomena as true of America, and in the face it puts on the phenomena it has assumed. The theorists who have propounded it give us, like Daniel, the dream as well as their interpretation of it. But the dream is one of their own inventing; and such as it is, it is wrongly interpreted.

Few mistakes are more common than that of exaggerating the influence of forms of government. As there are historians and politicians who, when they come across a trait of national character for which no obvious explanation presents itself, set it down to "race," so there are writers and speakers who, too indolent to examine the whole facts of the case, or too ill-trained to feel the need of such examination, pounce upon the political institutions of a country as the easiest way to account for its social and intellectual, perhaps even for its moral and religious peculiarities. Few problems are in reality more complex than the relation between the political and the intellectual life of a country; few things more difficult to distinguish than the influences respectively attributable to an equality of political rights and powers on the one hand, an equality of material and social conditions on the other. It is commonly assumed that Democracy and Equality go hand in hand, but as one may have popular government along with enormous differences of wealth and dissimilarities in social usage, so also one may have social equality under a despot. Doubtless, when social and political equality go hand in hand they intensify one another; but when inequality of material conditions becomes marked, social life changes, and as social phenomena become more complex their analysis becomes more difficult.

Reverting to the two theories from which we set out, it may be said that the United States furnish little support to either. American democracy has certainly produced no age of Pericles. Neither has it dwarfed literature and led a wretched people, so dull as not even to realize their dulness, into a barren plain of featureless mediocrity. To ascribe the deficiencies, such as they are, of art and culture in America, solely or even mainly to her form of government, is not less absurd than to ascribe, as many Americans of what I may call the trumpeting school do, her marvellous material progress to the same cause. It is not Democracy that has paid off a gigantic debt and raised Chicago out of a swamp. Neither is it Democracy that has denied her philosophers like Burke and poets like Wordsworth.

Most writers who have dealt with these matters have not only laid more upon the shoulders of democratic government than it ought to bear, but have preferred abstract speculations to the humbler task of ascertaining and weighing the facts. They have spun ingenious theories about democracy as the source of this or that, or whatever it pleased them to assume; they have not tried to determine by a wide induction what specific results appear in countries which, differing in other respects, agree in being democratically governed. If I do not follow these time-honoured precedents, it is not because the process is difficult, but because it is unprofitable. These speculations have perhaps had their use in suggesting to us what phenomena we ought to look for in democratic countries; but if any positive results are to be reached, they must be reached by carefully verifying the intellectual phenomena of more than one country, and establishing an unmistakable relation between them and the political institutions under which they prevail.

If some one, starting from the current conception of democracy, were to say that in a democratic nation we should find a disposition to bold and unbridled speculations, sparing neither theology nor morals, a total absence of rule, tradition, and precedent, each man thinking and writing as responsible to no criticism, "every poet his own Aristotle," a taste for strong effects and garish colours, valuing force rather than fineness, grandeur rather than beauty, a vigorous, hasty, impetuous style of speaking and writing, a grandiose, and perhaps sensational art: he would say what would be quite as natural and reasonable *a priori* as most of the pictures given us of democratic societies. Yet many of the suggested features would be the opposite of those which America presents.

Every such picture must be fanciful. He who starts from so simple and (so to speak) bare a conception as that of equal civil rights and equal political powers vested in every member of the community cannot but have recourse to his fancy in trying to body forth the results of this principle. Let any one study the portrait of the democratic man and democratic city which the first and greatest of all the hostile critics of democracy has left us,[1] and compare it with the very different descriptions of life and culture under a popular government in which European speculation has disported itself since De Tocqueville's time. He will find each theory plausible in the abstract, and each equally unlike the facts which contemporary America sets before us.

Let us then bid farewell to fancy and endeavour to discover what are now the salient intellectual features of the mass of the native population in the United States.

As there is much difference of opinion regarding them, I present with diffidence the following list:—

1. A desire to be abreast of the best thought and work of the world everywhere, to have every form of literature and art adequately represented, and excellent of its kind, so that America shall be felt to hold her own among the nations.

2. A fondness for bold and striking effects, a preference for large generalizations and theories which have an air of completeness.

3. An absence among the multitude of refined taste, and dis-

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[1] Plato indeed indulges his fancy so far as to describe the very mules and asses of a democracy as prancing along the roads, scarcely deigning to bear their burdens. The passion for unrestrained licence, for novelty, for variety is to him the note of democracy, whereas monotony and even obstinate conservatism are the faults which the latest European critics bid us expect.

position to be attracted rather by general brilliance than by delicacy of workmanship; a want of mellowness and inadequate perception of the difference between first-rate work in a quiet style and mere flatness.

4. Little respect for canons or traditions, accompanied by the notion that new conditions must of necessity produce new ideas.

5. An undervaluing of special knowledge or experience, except perhaps in the sphere of applied science and commerce, an idea that an able man can do one thing pretty much as well as another, as Dr. Johnson thought that if he had taken to politics he would have been as distinguished therein as he was in poetry.

6. An admiration for literary or scientific eminence, an enthusiasm for anything that can be called genius, with an over readiness to discover it.

7. A love of intellectual novelties.

8. An intellectual impatience, and desire for quick and patent results.

9. An over-valuing of the judgments of the multitude; a disposition to judge by "success" work which has not been produced for the sake of success.

10. A tendency to mistake bigness for greatness.

Contrariwise, if we regard not the people generally but the most cultivated class, we shall find, together with some of the above-mentioned qualities, others which indicate a reaction against the popular tendencies. This class has a strong relish for subtlety of thought and highly finished art, whether in literature or painting. It is so much afraid of crudity and vagueness as to be prone to devote itself to minute and careful study of subjects unattractive to the masses.

Of these characteristics of the people at large some may at first sight seem inconsistent with others, as for instance the admiration for intellectual gifts with the under-valuing of special knowledge; nevertheless it could be shown that both are discoverable in Americans as compared with Englishmen. The former admire intelligence more than the latter do: but they defer less to special competence. However, assuming for the moment that there is something true in these suggestions, which it would take too long to attempt to establish one by one, be it observed that very few of them can be directly connected with democratic government. Even these few might take a different form in a differently situated democracy. The seventh and eighth seem due to the general intelligence and education of the people, while the remainder, though not wholly uninfluenced by the habits which popular government tends to breed, must be mainly ascribed to the vast size of the country, the vast numbers and homogeneity of its native white population, the prevalence of social equality, a busy industrialism, a restless changefulness of occupation, and the absence of a leisured class dominant in matters of taste—conditions that have little or nothing to do with political institutions. The prevalence of evangelical Protestantism has been quite as important a factor in the intellectual life of the nation as its form of government.

Some one may say—I wish to state the view fairly though I do not entirely agree with it—that assuming the foregoing analysis to be correct, the influence of democracy, apart from its tendency to secure an ample provision of education, is discernible in two points. It produces self-confidence and self-complacency, national and personal, with the result both of stimulating a certain amount of thought and of preventing the thought that is so produced from being subjected to proper tests. Ambition and self-esteem will call out what might have lain dormant, but they will hinder a nation as well as a man from duly judging its own work, and in so far will retard its progress. Those who are naturally led to trust and obey common sense and the numerical majority in matters of state, over-value the judgment of the majority in other matters. Now the judgment of the masses is a poor standard for the thinker or the artist to set before him. It may narrow his view and debase his style. He fears to tread in new paths or express unpopular opinions; or if he despises the multitude he may take refuge in an acrid cynicism. Where the masses rule, a writer cannot but think of the masses, and as they do not appreciate refinements he will eschew these, making himself at all hazards intelligible to the common mind, and seeking to attract by broad, perhaps coarsely broad, effects, the hasty reader, who at the circulating libraries passes by Walter Scott or Thackeray to fasten on the latest sketch of fashionable life or mysterious crime.

I do not deny that there is some force in this way of putting the case. Democracy tends to produce a superficially active public and perhaps also a jubilant and self-confident public. But it is quite possible to have a democratic people which shall be neither fond of letters nor disposed to trust its own judgment and taste in judging them. Much will depend on the other features of the situation. In the United States the cultivated public increases rapidly, and the very reaction which goes on within it against the defects of the multitude becomes an important factor. All things considered, I doubt whether democracy tends to discourage originality, subtlety, refinement, in thought and in expression, whether literary or artistic. I doubt if there be any solid ground for expecting monotony or vulgarity under one form of government more than another. The causes lie deeper. Art and literature have before now been base and vulgar under absolute monarchies and under oligarchies. One of the most polished and aristocratic societies in Europe has for two centuries been that of Vienna; yet what society could have been intellectually duller or less productive? Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the habits of popular government which open a career to talent in public life, open it in literature also. No man need lean on a faction or propitiate a coterie. A pure clear voice with an unwonted message may at first fail to make itself heard over the din of competitors for popular favour; but once heard, it and its message will probably be judged on their own merits.

Passing away from this question as to the supposed narcotic power of democracy, the further question may be asked, what is the distinctive note of democratic thought and art as they actually appear in the United States? What is the peculiar quality or flavour which springs from this political element in their condition? I cannot tell. I find no such note. I have searched for it, and, as the Americans say, it is hard work looking for what is not there. Some Europeans and many Americans profess to have found it, and will tell you that this or that peculiarity of American literature is due to democracy. No doubt, if you take individual writers, you may discover in several of them something, though not always the same thing, which savours of democratic feeling and tinges their way of regarding human life. But that is not enough. What must be shown is a general quality running through the majority of these writers—a quality which is at once recognized as racy of the soil, and which can be traced back to the democratic element which the soil undoubtedly contains. No such quality seems to have been shown. That there is a distinctive note in many—not, perhaps, in all—of the best American books may be admitted. It may be caught by ears not the most delicate. But is this note the voice of democracy? Is it even the voice of democracy and equality combined? There is a difference, slight yet perceptible, in the part which both sentiment and humour play in American books, when we compare them with English books of equivalent strength. The humour has a vein of oddity, and the contrast between the soft copiousness of the sentiment and the rigid lines of lingering Puritanism which it suffuses, is rarely met with in England. Perhaps there is less repose in the American style; there is certainly a curious unrestfulness in the effort, less common in English writers, to bend metaphors to unwonted uses. But are these differences, with others I might mention—and, after all, they are slight—due to any cause connected with politics? Are they not rather due to a mixed and curiously intertwined variety of other causes which have moulded the American mind during the last two centuries? American imagination has produced nothing more conspicuously original than the romances of Hawthorne. If any one says that he finds something in them which he remembers in no previous English writer, we know what is meant and probably agree. But can it be said that there is anything distinctively American in Hawthorne, that is to say, that his specific quality is of a kind which reappears in other American writers? Few will affirm this. The most peculiar, and therefore I suppose the most characteristically American school of thought, has been what used to be called the Concord or Transcendental school of forty years ago; among the writings produced by which those of Emerson are best known in Europe. Were the authors of that school distinctively democratic either in the colour of their thought, or in its direction, or in the style which expresses it? And if so, can the same democratic tinge be discerned in the authors of to-day? I doubt it: but such matters do not admit of proof or disproof. One must leave them to the literary feeling of the reader.

A very distinguished American man of letters once said to me that he hated nothing so much as to hear people talk about American literature. He meant, I think, that those who did so were puzzling themselves unnecessarily to find something which belonged to a new country, and a democratic country, and were forgetting or ignoring the natural relation of works of imagination and thought produced in America to books written by men of the same race in the Old World before and since 1776.

So far, then, as regards American literature generally, I do not believe that there is in it anything specifically democratic. Nor if we look at the various departments of speculative thought, such as metaphysics and theology, or at those which approach nearer to the exact sciences, such as economics and jurisprudence, shall we find that the character and substance of the doctrines propounded bear marked traces of a democratic influence. Why should we be surprised at this, seeing that the influence of a form of government is only one among many influences, even where a nation stands alone, and creates a literature distinctively local? But can books written in the United States be deemed to constitute a literature locally American in the same sense as the literatures of France and Germany, of Italy and Russia, belong to those countries? For the purposes of thought and art the United States is a part of England, and England is a part of America. Many English books are more widely read and strike deeper to the heart in America than in England. Some American books have a like fortune in England. Differences there are, but differences how trivial compared with the resemblances in temper, in feeling, in susceptibility to certain forms of moral and physical beauty, in the general view of life and nature, in the disposition to revere and be swayed by the same matchless models of that elder literature which both branches of the English race can equally claim. American literature does not to-day differ more from English literature than the Scottish writers of eighty or a hundred years ago—Burns, Scott, Adam Smith, Reid, Hume, Robertson—differed from their English contemporaries. There was a fondness for abstractions and generalizations in the Scottish prose writers; there was in the Scottish poets a bloom and fragrance of mountain heather which gave to their work a charm of freshness and singularity, like that which a faint touch of local accent gives to the tongue of an orator. But they were English as well as Scottish writers: they belong to English literature and make part of its glory to the world beyond. So Fenimore Cooper, Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow, and those on whom their mantle has fallen, belong to England as well as to America; and English writers, as they more and more realize the vastness of the American public they address, will more and more feel themselves to be American as well as English, and will often find in America not only a larger but a more responsive audience.

We have been here concerned not to discuss the merits and estimate the place of American thinkers and writers, but only to examine the relation in which they stand to their political and social environment. That relation, however, sets before us one more question. The English-speaking population of the United States is one-third larger than that of the United Kingdom. It is a more educated population, in which a greater number of persons come under the influence of books and might therefore be stirred up to intellectual production. Why then does it not make more important contributions to the common literary wealth of the race? Is there a want of creative power? and if so, to what is the want due?

This is a question frequently propounded. I propose to consider it in the chapter which follows.

CHAPTER CVII

CREATIVE INTELLECTUAL POWER

There is a street in Florence on each side of which stand statues of the famous Florentines of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,—Dante, Giotto, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ghiberti, Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, and others scarcely less illustrious, all natives of the little city which in their days had never a population of more than sixty thousand souls.[1] No one can walk between these rows of world-famous figures, matched by no other city of the modern world, without asking himself what cause determined so much of the highest genius to this one spot; why in Italy herself populous Milan and Naples and Venice have no such list to show; why the succession of greatness stopped with the beginning of the sixteenth century and has never been resumed? Questions substantially the same constantly rise to the mind in reading the history of other countries. Why did England produce no first-rate poet in the two stirring centuries between Chaucer and Shakespeare, and again in the century and a half between Milton's birth and Wordsworth's? Why have epochs of comparative sterility more than once fallen upon Germany and France? and why has music sometimes reached its highest pitch of excellence at moments when the other arts were languishing? Why does the sceptre of intellectual and artistic leadership pass now to one great nation, now to another, inconstant and unpredictable as are the shifting winds?

These questions touch the deepest and most complex problems of history; and neither historian nor physiologist has yet been able to throw any real light upon them. Even the commonplace remark that times of effort and struggle tend to develop an unusually active intellectual movement and therewith to awaken or nourish rare geniuses, is not altogether true; for some of the geniuses have arisen at moments when there was no excitement to call them forth, and at other times seasons of storm and stress have raised up no one capable of directing the efforts or interpreting the feelings of his generation. One thing, however, is palpable: numbers have nothing to do with the matter. There is no average of a man of genius to so many thousands or millions of persons. Out of the sixty thousand of Florence there arise during two centuries more men of undying fame than out of huge London during the last three centuries. Even the stock of solid second-class ability does not necessarily increase with increasing numbers; while as to those rare combinations of gifts which produce poetry or philosophy of the first order, they are revealed no more frequently in a great European nation now than they were in a Semitic tribe or a tiny Greek city twenty-five or thirty centuries ago.

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[1] Petrarch saw the light in Arezzo, but his family was Florentine, and it was by a mere accident that he was born away from his own city.

There is therefore no reason why the absence of brilliant genius among the sixty millions in the United States should excite any surprise; we might as well wonder that there is no Goethe, or Schiller or Kant or Hegel in the Germany of to-day, so much more populous and better educated than the Germany of their birth-time. It is not to be made a reproach against America that men like Tennyson or Darwin have not been born there. "The wind bloweth where it listeth;" the rarest gifts appear no one can tell why or how. In broad France a century ago no man was found able to spring upon the neck of the Revolution and turn it to his will. Fate brought her favourite from a wild Italian island, that had but just passed under the yoke of the nation to which it gave a master.

The question we have to ask as regards the United States is therefore not why it has given us few men of the highest and rarest distinction, but whether it has failed to produce its fair share of talents of the second rank, that is, of men capable of taking a lead in all the great branches of literary or artistic or scientific activity, men who instruct and delight their own generation, though possibly future generations may not hold all of them in remembrance.

Have fewer men of this order adorned the roll of fame in the United States, during the century of their independence, than in England, or France, or Germany during the same period? Obviously this is the fact as regards art in all its branches; and also as regards physical and mathematical science. In literature the disparity is less evident, yet most candid Americans will agree with Englishmen that it is greater than those who know the education and intelligence of the younger people would have expected. I pass by oratory and statesmanship, because comparison is in these fields very difficult. The fact therefore being admitted, we have to endeavour to account for it.

If the matter were one of numerical averages, it would be pertinent to remark that of the sixty millions of people in the United States seven or eight millions are negroes, at present altogether below the stratum from which production can be expected; that of the whites there may be nearly two millions to whom English is a foreign language, and that several millions are recent immigrants from Europe. This diminishes the contrast between numbers and intellectual results. But numbers have so little to do with the question that the point deserves no more than a passing reference.

Those who have discussed the conditions of intellectual productivity have often remarked that epochs of stir and excitement are favourable, because they stimulate men's minds, setting new ideas afloat, and awakening new ambitions. It is also true that vigorous unremitting labour is, speaking generally, needed for the production of good work, and that one is therefore less entitled to expect it in an indolent time and from members of the luxurious classes. But it is not less true, though less frequently observed, that tranquillity and repose are necessary to men of the kind we are considering, and often helpful even to the highest geniuses, for the evolving of new thoughts and the creation of forms of finished and harmonious beauty. He who is to do such work must have time to meditate, and pause, and meditate again. He must be able to set his creation aside, and return to it after days or weeks to look at it with fresh eyes. He must be neither distracted from his main purpose, nor hurried in effecting it. He must be able to concentrate the whole force of his reason or imagination on one subject, to abstract himself when needful from the flitting sights and many-voiced clamour of the outer world. Juvenal said this long ago about the poet; it also applies, though possibly in a lower degree, both to the artist and to the serious thinker, or delicate workman, in any field of literature, to the metaphysician, the theologian, the philosophic historian, the economist, the philologist, even the novelist and the statesman. I have heard men who had gone from a quiet life into politics complain that they found their thinking powers wither, and that while they became far more expert in getting up subjects and speaking forcibly and plausibly, they found it harder and harder to form sound general views and penetrate beneath the superficialities of the newspaper and the platform. Interrupted thought, trains of reflection or imaginative conceptions constantly broken by a variety of petty transient calls of business, claims of society, matters passing in the world to note and think of, not only tire the mind but destroy its chances of attaining just and deep views of life and nature, as a wind-ruffled pool ceases to reflect the rocks and woods around it. Mohammed falling into trances on the mountain above Mecca, Dante in the sylvan solitudes of Fonte Avellana, Cervantes and Bunyan in the enforced seclusion of a prison, Hegel so wrapt and lost in his speculations that, taking his manuscript to the publisher in Jena on the day of the great battle, he was surprised to see French soldiers in the streets; these are types of the men and conditions which give birth to thoughts that occupy succeeding generations: and what is true of these greatest men is perhaps even more true of men of the next rank. Doubtless many great works have been produced among inauspicious surroundings, and even under severe pressure of time; but it will, I think, be almost invariably found that the producer had formed his ideas or conceived his creations in hours of comparative tranquillity, and had turned on them the full stream of his powers to the exclusion of whatever could break or divert its force.

In Europe men call this a century of unrest. But the United States is more unrestful than Europe, more unrestful than any country we know of has yet been. Nearly every one is busy; those few who have not to earn their living and do not feel called to serve their countrymen, find themselves out of place, and have been wont either to make amusement into a business or to transfer themselves to the ease of France or Italy. The earning of one's living is not, indeed, incompatible with intellectually creative work, for many of those who have done such work best have done it in addition to their gainful occupation, or have earned their living by it. But in America it is unusually hard for any one to withdraw his mind from the endless variety of external impressions and interests which daily life presents, and which impinge upon the mind, I will not say to vex it, but to keep it constantly vibrating to their touch. Life is that of the squirrel in his revolving cage, never still even when it does not seem to change. It becomes every day more and more so in England, and English literature and art show increasing marks of haste. In the United States the ceaseless stir and movement, the constant presence of newspapers, the eagerness which looks through every pair of eyes, even that active intelligence and sense of public duty, strongest in the best minds, which make a citizen feel that he ought to know what is passing in the wider world as well as in his own, all these render life more exciting to the average man than it is in Europe; but chase away from it the opportunities for repose and meditation which art and philosophy need, as growing plants need the coolness and darkness of night no less than the blaze of day. The type of mind which American conditions have evolved is quick, vigorous, practical, versatile; but it is unfavourable to the natural germination and slow ripening of large and luminous ideas; it wants the patience that will spend weeks or months on bringing details to an exquisite perfection. And accordingly we see that the most rich and finished literary work America has given us has proceeded from the older regions of the country, where the pulsations of life are slower and steadier than in the West or in the great commercial cities. It is from New England that nearly all the best books of the last generation came; and that not solely because the English race has been purest there, and education most generally diffused, for the New Englanders who have gone West, though they have carried with them their moral standard and their bright intelligence, seem either to have left behind their gift for literary creation, or to care to employ it only in teaching and in journalism.

It may be objected to this view that some of the great literary ages, such as the Periclean age at Athens, the Medicean age at Florence, the age of Elizabeth in England, have been ages full of movement and excitement. But the unrestfulness which prevails in America is altogether different from the large variety of life, the flow of stimulating ideas and impressions which marked those ages. Life is not as interesting in America, except as regards commercial speculation, as it is in Europe; because society and the environment of man are too uniform. It is hurried and bustling; it is filled with a multitude of duties and occupations and transient impressions. In the ages I have referred to men had time enough for all there was to do, and the very scantiness of literature and rarity of news made that which was read and received tell more powerfully upon the imagination.

Nor is it only the distractions of American life that clog the wings of invention. The atmosphere is over full of all that pertains to material progress. Americans themselves say, when excusing the comparative poverty of learning and science, that their chief occupation is at present the subjugation of their continent, that it is an occupation large enough to demand most of the energy and ambition of the nation, but that presently, when this work is done, the same energy and ambition will win similar triumphs in the fields of abstract thought, while the gifts which now make them the first nation in the world for practical inventions, will then assure to them a like place in scientific discovery. There is evidently much truth in this. The attractions of practical life are so great to men conscious of their own vigour, the development of the West and the vast operations of commerce and finance which have accompanied that development have absorbed so many strenuous talents, that the supply of ability available not only for pure science (apart from its applications) and for philosophical and historical studies, but even for statesmanship, has been proportionately reduced. But, besides this withdrawal of an unusually large part of the nation's force, the predominance of material and practical interests has turned men's thoughts and conversation into a channel unfavourable to the growth of the higher and more solid kinds of literature, perhaps still more unfavourable to art. Goethe said, *apropos* of the good work produced by such men as Ampère and Merimée at a very early age, "If a talent is to be speedily and happily developed the chief point is that a great deal of intellect and sound culture should be current in a nation." There is certainly a great deal of intellect current in the United States. But it is chiefly directed to business, that is, to railways, to finance, to commerce, to inventions, to manufactures (as well as to practical professions like law), things which play a relatively larger part than in Europe, as subjects of universal attention and discussion. There is abundance of sound culture, but it is so scattered about in divers places and among small groups which seldom meet one another, that no large cultured society has arisen similar to that of European capitals or to that which her universities have created for Germany. In Boston twenty years ago a host could have brought together round his table nine men as interesting and cultivated as Paris or London would have furnished. But a similar party of eighteen could not have been collected, nor perhaps even the nine, anywhere except in Boston. At present, culture is more diffused: there are many cities where men of high attainments and keen intellectual interests are found, and associate themselves in literary or scientific clubs. Societies for the study of particular authors are not uncommon among women. I remember to have been told of a Homer club and an Æschylus club, formed by the ladies of St. Louis, and of a Dante club in some Eastern city. Nevertheless a young talent gains less than it would gain in Europe from the surroundings into which it is born. The atmosphere is not charged with ideas as in Germany, nor with critical *finesse* as in France. Stimulative it is, but the stimulus drives eager youth away from the groves of the Muses into the struggling throng of the market-place.

It may be thought fanciful to add that in a new country one whole set of objects which appeal to the imagination, are absent,—no castles gray with age; no solemn cathedrals whose altering styles of architecture carry the mind up or down the long stream of history from the eleventh to the seventeenth century; few spots or edifices consecrated by memories of famous men or deeds, and among these none of remote date. There is certainly no want of interest in those few spots: the warmth with which Americans cherish them puts to shame the indifference of the English Parliament to the historic and prehistoric sites and buildings of Britain. But not one American youth in a thousand comes under the spell of any such associations. In the city or State where he lives there is nothing to call him away from the present. All he sees is new, and has no glories to set before him save those of accumulated wealth and industry skilfully applied to severely practical ends.

Some one may say that if (as was observed in last chapter) English and American literature are practically one, there is no need to explain the fact that one part of a race undivided for literary purposes leaves the bulk of literary production to be done by the other part, seeing that it can enter freely into the labours of the latter and reckon them its own. To argue thus would be to push the doctrine of the unity of the two branches rather too far, for after all there is much in American conditions and life which needs its special literary and artistic interpretations; and the question would still confront us, why the trans-atlantic branch, nowise inferior in mental force, contributes less than its share to the common stock. Still it is certainly true that the existence of a great body of producers, in England of literature, as in France of pictures, diminishes the need for production in America. Or to put the same thing in another way, if the Americans did not speak English they would evidently feel called on to create more high literature for themselves. Many books which America might produce are not produced because the men qualified to write them know that there are already English books on the same subject; and the higher such men's standard is, the more apt are they to overrate the advantages which English authors enjoy as compared with themselves. Many feelings and ideas which now find adequate expression through the English books which Americans read would then have to be expressed through American books, and their literature would be not only more individual, but more copious and energetic. If it lost in breadth, it would gain in freshness and independence. American authors conceive that even the non-recognition of international copyright has told for evil on their profession. Since the native writer has been undersold by reprints of English and French books, which, paying nothing to the European author, can be published at the cost of the paper and printing only, native authorship is discouraged, native talent diverted into other fields, while at the same time the intellectual standard of the public is lowered and its taste vulgarized. It might be thought that the profusion of cheap reprints would tend to quicken thought and diffuse the higher kinds of knowledge among the masses. But experience proves that by far the largest part of these reprints, and the part which is most extensively read, are novels, and among them many flimsy novels, which drive better books, including some of the best American fiction, out of the market, and tend to Europeanize the American mind in the worst way. One may smile at the suggestion that the allegiance of the working classes to their democratic institutions will be seduced by descriptions of English duchesses;[1] yet it is probably true—eminent observers assure one of it—that the profusion of new frothy or highly-spiced fiction offered at fivepence or tenpence a volume tends to spoil the popular palate for the enjoyment of more wholesome and nutritious food. And if it injures the higher literature by diminishing the demand, it may further injure it by creating an atmosphere unfavourable to the growth of pure and earnest native literary talent.

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[1] I have seen this argument advanced.

What then of the newspapers? The newspapers are too large a subject for this chapter, and their influence as organs of opinion has been already discussed. The vigour and brightness of many among them are surprising. Nothing escapes them: everything is set in the sharpest, clearest light. Their want of reticence and delicacy is regretfully admitted by all educated Americans—the editors, I think, included. The cause of this deficiency is probably to be found in the fact that, whereas the first European journals were written for the polite world of large cities, American journals were, early in their career, if not at its very beginning, written for the bulk of the people, and published in communities still so small that everybody's concerns were already pretty well known to everybody else. They had attained no high level of literary excellence when some forty years ago an enterprising man of unrefined taste created a new type of "live" newspaper, which made a rapid success by its smartness, copiousness, and variety, while addressing itself entirely to the multitude. Other papers were almost forced to shape themselves on the same lines, because the class which desired something more choice was still relatively small; and now the journals of the chief cities have become such vast commercial concerns that they still think first of the mass and are controlled by its tastes, which they have themselves done so much to create. There are cities where the more refined readers who dislike flippant personalities are counted by tens of thousands, but in such cities competition is now too severe to hold out much prospect of success to a paper which does not expect the support of hundreds of thousands. It is not, however, with the æsthetic or moral view of the newspaper that we are here concerned, but with the effect on the national mind of the enormous ratio which the reading of newspapers bears to all other reading, a ratio higher than even in France or England. A famous Englishman, himself a powerful and fertile thinker, contrasted the value of the history of Thucydides with that of a single number of the *Times* newspaper, greatly to the advantage of the latter. Others may conceive that a thoughtful study of Thucydides, or, not to go beyond our own tongue, of Bacon.

Milton, Locke, or Burke, perhaps even of Gibbon, Grote, or Macaulay, will do more to give keenness to the eye and strength to the wings of the mind than a whole year's reading of the best daily newspaper. It is not merely that the matter is of more permanent and intrinsic worth, nor that the manner and style form the student's taste; it is not merely that in the newspaper we are in contact with persons like ourselves, in the other case with rare and splendid intellects. The whole attitude of the reader is different. His attention is loose, his mind unbraced, so that he does not stop to scrutinize an argument, and forgets even valuable facts as quickly as he has learnt them. If he read Burke as he reads the newspaper, Burke would do him little good. And therefore the habit of mind produced by a diet largely composed of newspapers is adverse to solid thinking and dulling to the sense of beauty. Scorched and stony is the soil which newspaper reading has prepared to receive the seeds of genius.

Does the modern world really gain, so far as creative thought is concerned, by the profusion of cheap literature? It is a question one often asks in watching the passengers on an American railway. A boy walks up and down the car scattering newspapers and books in paper covers right and left as he goes. The newspapers are glanced at, though probably most people have read several of the day's papers already. The books are nearly all novels. They are not bad in tone, and sometimes they give incidentally a superficial knowledge of things outside the personal experience of the reader; while from their newspapers the passengers draw a stock of information far beyond that of a European peasant, or even of an average European artisan. Yet one feels that this constant succession of transient ideas, none of them impressively though many of them startlingly stated, all of them flitting swiftly past the mental sight as the trees flit past the eyes when one looks out of the car window, is no more favourable to the development of serious intellectual interests and creative intellectual power than is the limited knowledge of the European artisan.

Most of the reasons I have hazarded to account for a phenomenon surprising to one who recognizes the quantity of intellect current in America, and the diffusion, far more general than in any other country, of intellectual curiosity, are reasons valid in the Europe of to-day as compared with the Europe of last century, and still more true of the modern world as compared with the best periods of the ancient. Printing is by no means pure gain to the creative faculties, whatever it may be to the acquisitive; even as a great ancient thinker seems to have thought that the invention of writing in Egypt had weakened the reflective powers of man. The question follows, Are these causes, supposing them to be true causes, likely to be more or less operative in the America of next century than they now are? Will America become more what Europe is now, or will she be even more American?

I have elsewhere thrown out some conjectures on this point. Meantime it is pertinent to ask what are the most recent developments of American thought and research, for this will help us to see whether the tide of productive endeavour is rising or falling.

The abundant and excellent work done in fiction need be mentioned only for the sake of calling attention to the interest it has, over and above its artistic merit, as a record of the local manners and usages and types of character in various parts of the Union—types which are fast disappearing. The Creoles of Louisiana, the negroes under slavery, with African tales still surviving in their memories, the rough but kindly backwoodsmen of Indiana forty years ago, the humours of the Mississippi steamboat and the adventurous life of the Far West, are all known to Europe through the tales of writers now living, as the Indians of eighty years ago became known through the romances of Fenimore Cooper. However, this is familiar ground to European readers, so I pass to work of a less generally attractive order.

Thirty years ago the standard of classical scholarship was low, and even the school commentaries on classical authors fell far short of those produced in Germany or England. Nowadays both in classical and in Oriental philology admirably thorough and painstaking work is produced. I have heard high European authorities observe that there is an almost excessive anxiety among American scholars to master all that has been written, even by third-rate Germans, and that the desire they evince to overtake Germany in respect of knowledge betrays some among them into the German fault of neglecting merits of form and style. In the sciences of nature, especially in those of observation, remarkable advances have been made. Dr. Asa Gray, whom the eldest American university has lately lost, was one of the two or three greatest botanists of his age. Much excellent work has been done in geology and palæontology, particularly in exploring the Rocky Mountain regions. Both for the excellence of their instruments and the accuracy of their observations, the astronomers stand in the front rank; nor do they fall behind Europe in the theoretical part of this science. In some branches of physics and chemistry, such as spectrum analysis, American investigators have won like fame. Competent authorities award the highest praise to their recent contributions to biology and to medical science. In economics they seem to stand before either England or France, both as regards the extent to which the subject is studied in universities and as regards the number of eminent persons whom it occupies. In jurisprudence and law, American text-books are quite as good as those produced in England;[1] and one author, the late Mr. Justice Story, deserves, looking to the quantity as well as to the quality of his work, to be placed at the head of all who have handled these topics in the English tongue during the lasty sixty years. Political science has begun to be studied more energetically than in England, where, to be sure, it is scarcely studied at all; and every year sees treatises and articles of permanent value added to the scanty modern literature which our language possesses on this subject. Similarly there is great activity in the field of both secular and ecclesiastical history, though as the work done has largely taken the direction of inquiries into the early history of institutions, and has altogether been more in the nature of research than of treatises attractive to the general public, its quantity and its merits have not yet been duly appreciated even at home, much less in Europe. Indeed, it is remarkable how far from showy and sensational is the bulk of the work now done in America. It is mostly work of the German type, solid, careful, exact, not at all the sort of work which theorists about democracy would have looked for, since it appeals rather to the learned few than to the so-called general reader. One receives the impression that the class of intellectual workers, who until recently wanted institutions in which the highest and fullest training could be had, have now become sensible that their country, occupied in developing its resources and educating its ordinary citizens, had fallen behind Europe in learning and science, and that they are therefore the more eager to accumulate knowledge and spend their energy in minutely laborious special studies.[1]

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[1] The number of legal journals and magazines in the United States is very much larger than in England, and the average level of workmanship in them seems to be higher.

I may be reminded that neither in the departments above mentioned, nor in statesmanship, can one point to many brilliant personalities. The men whose names rise to the lips of a European are all advanced in life. Perhaps this is true of Europe also; perhaps the world has entered on an age of mediocrities. Some one lately said that there was now nobody in Paris, Berlin, or London under sixty years of age whom one would cross the street to look at. If this be so, it is not merely because length of years has given better chances of winning fame, for nearly all the men now famous in Europe had won fame before they were forty. There have been periods in history when striking figures were lacking, although great events seem to call for them. As regards America, if there be few persons of exceptional gifts, it is significant that the number of those who are engaged in scientific work, whether in the investigation of nature or in the moral, political, and historical sciences, is larger, relatively to the population of the country, than it was thirty years ago, the methods better, the work done more solid, the spirit more earnest and eager. Nothing more strikes a stranger who visits the American universities than the ardour with which the younger generation has thrown itself into study, even kinds of study which which will never win the applause of the multitude. There is more zeal and heartiness among these men, more freshness of mind, more love of learning for its own sake, more willingness to forego the chances of fame and wealth for the sake of adding to the stock of human knowledge, than is to be found to-day in Oxford or Cambridge, or in the universities of Scotland. One is reminded of the scholars of the Renaissance flinging themselves into the study of rediscovered philology, or of the German universities after the War of Liberation. And under the impressions formed in mingling with such men, one learns to agree with the conviction of the Americans that for a nation so abounding in fervid force there is reserved a fruitful career in science and letters, no less than in whatever makes material prosperity.

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[1] The extreme pains taken in America to provide every library with a classified catalogue directing readers to the books on each subject, seem to illustrate this tendency.

CHAPTER CVIII

THE RELATION OF THE UNITED STATES TO EUROPE

One cannot discuss American literature and thought without asking, What is the intellectual relation of the United States to Europe? Is it that of an equal member of the great republic of letters? Or is it that of a colony towards the mother country, or of a province towards a capital? Is it, to take instances from history, such a relation as was that of Rome to Greece in the second and first centuries before Christ? or of Northern and Western Europe to Italy in the fifteenth? or of Germany to France in the eighteenth? in all of which cases there was a measure of intellectual dependence on the part of a nation which felt itself in other respects as strong as or stronger than that whose models it followed, and from whose hearth it lighted its own flame.

To answer this question we must first answer another—How do the Americans themselves conceive their position towards Europe? and this, again, suggests a third — What does the American people think of itself?

Fifty, or even forty years ago, the conceit of this people was a byword. It was not only self-conscious but obtrusive and aggressive. Every visitor satirized it, Dickens most keenly of all, in forgiving whom the Americans gave the strongest proof of their good nature. Doubtless all nations are either vain or proud, or both; and those not least who receive least recognition from their neighbours.[1] A nation could hardly stand without this element to support its self-reliance; though when pushed to an extreme it may, as happens with the Turks, make national ruin the more irretrievable. But American conceit has been steadily declining as the country has grown older, more aware of its true strength, more respected by other countries.[1] There was less conceit after the Civil War than before, though the Civil War had revealed elements of greatness unexpected by foreigners; there is less now than there was at the close of the Civil War. An impartially rigorous censor from some other planet might say of the Americans that they are at this moment less priggishly supercilious than the Germans, less restlessly pretentious than the French, less pharisaically self-satisfied than the English. Among the upper or better-educated classes, glorification has died out, except of course in Fourth of July and other public addresses, when the scream of the national eagle must be heard. One sometimes finds it replaced by undue self-depreciation, with lamentations over the want of culture, the decline of faith, or the corruption of politics. Among the masses it survives in an exultation over the size and material resources of the country,—the physically large is to them the sublime,—in an over-estimate of men and events in American history; in a delight, strongest, of course, among the recent immigrants, in the completeness of social equality, and a corresponding contempt for the "serfs of Europe" who submit to be called "subjects" of their sovereign, in a belief in the superior purity of their domestic life and literature, and in the notion that they are the only people who enjoy true political liberty,[2] liberty far fuller than that of England, far more orderly than that of France. Taking all classes together, they are now not more sensitive to external opinion than the nations of Western Europe, and less so than the Russians, though they are still a trifle more apt to go through Europe comparing what they find with what they left at home. A foreign critic who tries to flout or scourge them no longer disturbs their composure; his jeers are received with amusement or indifference. Their patriotism is in one respect stronger than that of Frenchmen or Englishmen, because it is less broken by class feeling, but it has ceased to be aggressive.

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[1] The Danes and Portuguese are examples.

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[1] De Tocqueville complains that the Americans would not permit a stranger to pass even the smallest unfavourable criticism on any of their institutions, however warmly he might express his admiration of the rest.

[2] It must, however, be admitted that this whimsical idea is not confined to the masses. I find, for instance, in an address delivered by an eminent man to a distinguished literary fraternity in October 1887 the following passage: "They (*i.e.* 'the immortal periods of the Declaration of Independence') have given political freedom to America and France, unity and nationality to Germany and Italy, emancipated the Russian serf, relieved Prussia and Hungary from feudal tenures, *and will in time free Great Britain and Ireland also*"!

I have often asked Americans wherein they consider their freedom superior to that of the English, but have never found them able to indicate a single point in which the individual man is worse off in England as regards either his private civil rights, or his political rights, or his general liberty of doing and thinking as he pleases. They generally turn the discussion to social equality, the existence of a monarchy and of hereditary titles, and so forth—matters which are of course quite different from freedom in its proper sense.

Accordingly the attitude of thoughtful Americans to Europe has no longer either the old open antagonism or the old latent self-distrust. It is that of a people which conceives itself to be intellectually the equal of any other people, but to have taken upon itself for the time a special task which impedes it in the race of literary and artistic development. Its mission is to reclaim the waste lands of a continent, to furnish homes for instreaming millions of strangers, to work out a system of harmonious and orderly democratic institutions. That it may fulfil these tasks it has for the moment postponed certain other tasks which it will in due time resume. Meanwhile it may, without loss of dignity or of faith in itself, use and enjoy the fruits of European intellect which it imports until it sees itself free to rival them by native growths. If I may resort to a homely comparison, the Americans are like a man whose next-door neighbour is in the habit of giving musical parties in the summer evenings. When one of these parties comes off, he sits with his family in the balcony to enjoy the quartettes and solos which float across to him through the open windows. He feels no inferiority, knowing that when he pleases he can have performers equally good to delight his own friends, though for this year he prefers to spend his surplus income in refurnishing his house or starting his son in business.

There is of course a difference in the view of the value of European work as compared with their own, taken by the more educated and by the less educated classes. Of the latter some fail to appreciate the worth of culture and of science, even for practical purposes, as compared with industrial success, though in this respect they are no more obtuse than the bulk of Englishmen; and they accordingly underrate their obligations to Europe. Others, knowing that they ought to admire works of imagination and research, but possessed of more patriotism than discernment, cry up second or third rate fiction, poetry, and theology because it is American, and try to believe that their country gives as much to Europe as she receives. Taste for literature is so much more diffused than taste in literature that a certain kind of fame is easily won. There are dozens of poets and scores of poetesses much admired in their own State, some even beyond its limits, with no merit but that of writing verse which can be scanned, and will raise no blush on the most sensitive cheek. Criticism is lenient, or rather it does not exist, for the few journals which contain good reviews are little read except in four or five Northern Atlantic States, and several inland cities. A really active and searching criticism, which should appraise literary work on sound canons, not caring whether it has been produced in America or in Europe, by a man or by a woman, in the East or in the West, is one of the things most needed in America. Among highly educated men this extravagant appreciation of native industry produces a disgust expressing itself sometimes in sarcasm, sometimes in despondency. Many deem their home-grown literature trivial, and occupy themselves with European books, watching the presses of England, France, and Germany more carefully than almost any one does in England. Yet even these, I think, cherish silently the faith that when the West has been settled and the railways built, and possibilities of sudden leaps to wealth diminished, when culture has diffused itself among the classes whose education is now superficial, and their love of art extended itself from furniture to pictures and statuary, American literature will in due course flower out with a brilliance of bloom and a richness of fruit rivailing the Old World.

The United States are therefore, if this account be correct, in a relation to Europe for which no exact historical parallel can be found. They do not look up to her, nor seek to model themselves after her. They are too proud for a province, too large for a colony. They certainly draw from Europe far more thought than they send to her, while of art they produce little and export nothing. Yet they cannot be said to be led or ruled by Europe, because they apply their own standards and judgment to whatever they receive.

Their special relations to the leading European countries are worth noting. In old colonial days England was everything. The revolt of 1776 produced an estrangement which might have been healed after 1783, had England acted with common courtesy and good sense, but which was embittered by her scornful attitude. Wounds which were just beginning to scar over were reopened by the war of 1812; and the hostility continued as long as the generation lived whose manhood saw that war. De Tocqueville in 1833 says he can imagine no hatred more venomous than that between the Americans and the English. The generation which remembered 1812 was disappearing when the sympathy of the English upper classes for the Southern Confederacy in 1861-65 lit up the almost extinguished flames. These have been quenched, so far as the native Americans are concerned, by the settlement of the Alabama claims, which impressed the United States not merely as a concession to themselves, but as an evidence of the magnanimity of a proud country. There is still a certain amount of rivalry with England, and a certain suspicion that the English are trying to patronize even when the latter are innocent of such intentions. Now and then an Englishman who, feeling himself practically at home, speaks with the same freedom as he would use there, finds himself misunderstood. But these lingering touches of jealousy are slight compared with the growing sympathy felt for "the old country" as it is still called. It is the only European country in which the American people can be said to feel any personal interest, or towards an alliance with which they are drawn by any sentiment. For a time, however, the sense of gratitude to France for her aid in the War of Independence was very strong. It brought French literature as well as some French usages into vogue, and increased the political influence which France exercised during the earlier years of her own Revolution. Still that influence did not go far beyond the sphere of politics: one feels it but slightly in the literature of the half century from 1780 to 1830.

During the reign of Louis Napoleon, wealthy Americans resorted largely to Paris, and there, living often for years together in a congenial atmosphere of display and amusement, imbibed undemocratic tastes and ideas, which through them found their way back across the ocean, and coloured certain sections of American society, particularly in New York. Although there is still an American colony in Paris, Parisian influence seems no longer to cross the Atlantic. French books, novels excepted, and these in translations, are not largely read. French politics excite little interest: France is practically not a factor at all in the moral or intellectual life of the country. Over art, however, especially painting and decoration, she has still great power. Many American artists study in Paris, indeed all resort thither who do not go to Rome or Florence; French pictures enjoy such favour with American dealers and private buyers as to make the native artists complain, not without reason, that equally good home-made work receives no encouragement;[1] and house decoration, in which America seems to stand before England, particularly in the skilful use of wood, is much affected by French designs and methods.

The enormous German immigration of the last thirty years might have been expected to go far towards Germanizing the American mind, giving it a taste for metaphysics on the one hand, and for minutely patient research on the other. It does not seem to have had either the one result or the other, or indeed any result whatever in the field of thought. It has enormously stimulated the brewing industry: it has retarded the progress of Prohibitionism: it has introduced more out-door life than formerly existed: it has increased the taste for music, it has broken down the strictness of Sabbath observance, and has indeed in some cities produced what is commonly called "a Continental Sunday." But the vast majority of German immigrants belong to the humbler classes. There have been among them extremely few *savants*, or men likely to become *savants*, nor have these played any conspicuous part in the universities or in literature.[2]

Nevertheless the influence of Germany has been of late years powerfully stimulative upon the cultivated classes, for not only are German treatises largely read, but many of the most promising graduates of the universities proceed to Germany for a year or two to complete their studies, and there become imbued with German ideas and methods. The English universities have, by their omission to develop advanced instruction in special branches of knowledge, lost a golden opportunity of coming into relation with and influencing that academic youth of America in whose hands the future of American science and learning lies. This German strain in American work has however not tended towards the propagation of metaphysical schools, metaphysics

[1] There is a heavy customs duty on foreign works of art, but this does not greatly help the native artist, for the men who buy pictures can usually buy notwithstanding the duty, while it prevents the artist from furnishing himself with the works he needs to have around him for the purposes of his own training.

[2] Mr. A. D. White, in an interesting article on the influence of German thought in the United States, cites only Lieber and Mr. Carl Schurz. In public life two or three Germans have attained high distinction.

themselves being now on the ebb in Germany. It appears in some departments of theology, and is also visible in historical and philological studies, in economics, and in the sciences of nature.

On the more popular kinds of literature, as well as upon manners, social usages, current sentiment generally, England and her influences are of course nearer and more potent than those of any other European country, seeing that English books go everywhere among all classes, and that they work upon those who are substantially English already in their fundamental ideas and habits. Americans of the cultivated order, and especially women, are more alive to the movements and changes in the lighter literature of England, and more curious about those who figure in it, especially the rising poets and essayists, than equally cultivated English men and women. I have been repeatedly surprised to find books and men that had made no noise in London well known in the Atlantic States, and their merits canvassed with more zest and probably more acuteness than a London drawing-room would have shown. The verdicts of the best circles were not always the same as those of similar circles in England, but they were nowise biassed by national feeling, and often seemed to proceed from a more delicate and sympathetic insight. I recollect, though I had better not mention, instances in which they welcomed English books which England had failed to appreciate, and refused to approve American books over which English reviewers had become ecstatic.

Passing English fashions in social customs and in such things as games sometimes spread to America,—possibly more often than similar American fashions do to England—but sometimes encounter ridicule there. The Anglomaniac is a familiar object of good-humoured satire. As for those large movements of opinion or taste or practical philanthropy in which a parallelism or correspondence between the two countries may often be discerned, this correspondence is more frequently due to the simultaneous action of the same causes than to any direct influence of the older country. In theology, for instance, the same relaxation of the rigid tests of orthodoxy has been making way in the churches of both nations. In the Protestant Episcopal Church there has been a similar, though less pronounced, tendency to the development of an ornate ritual. The movement for dealing with city pauperism by voluntary organizations began later than the Charity Organization societies of England, but would probably have begun without their example. The rapidly growing taste for beauty in house decoration and in street architecture is a birth of the time rather than of Old World teaching, though it owes something to Mr. Ruskin's books, which have been more widely read in America than in England.[1]

In political matters the intellectual sympathy of the two countries is of course less close than in the matters just described, because the difference between institutions and conditions involves a diversity in the problems which call for a practical solution. Political changes in England affect American opinion less than such changes in France affect English opinion, although the Americans know more and care more and judge more soundly about English affairs than the French do about English or the English about French. The cessation of bitterness between Great Britain and the Irish would make a difference in American politics, but no political event in England less serious than, let us say, the establishment of a powerful Socialist party, would sensibly tell on American opinion, just as no event happening beyond the Atlantic, except the rise and fall of the Southern Confederacy, has influenced the course of English political thought. However, the wise men of the West watch English experiments for light and guidance in their own troubles. A distinguished American who came a year or two ago to London to study English politics, told me that he did so in the hope of finding conservative institutions and forces from which lessons might be learned that would be, as he thought, very serviceable to the United States. After a fortnight, however, he concluded that England was in a state of suppressed revolution, and departed sorrowful.

On a review of the whole matter it will appear that although as respects most kinds of intellectual work America is rather in the position of the consumer, Europe, and especially England, in that of the producer, although America is more influenced by English and German books and by French art than these countries are influenced by her, still she does not look for initiative to them, or hold herself in any way their disciple. She is in many points independent; and in all fully persuaded of her independence.

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[1] America has produced of late years at least one really distinguished architect now unhappily lost to her: and the art seems to be making rapid progress.

Will she then in time develop a new literature, bearing the stamp of her own mint? She calls herself a new country: will she give the world a new philosophy, new views of religion, a new type of life in which plain living and high thinking may be more happily blended than we now see them in the Old World, a life in which the franker recognition of equality will give a freshness to ideas and to manners a charm of simplicity which the aristocratic societies of Europe have failed to attain?

As regards manners and life, she has already approached nearer this happy combination than any society of the Old World. As regards ideas, I have found among the most cultivated Americans a certain cosmopolitanism of view, and detachment from national or local prejudice, superior to that of the same classes in France, England, or Germany. In the ideas themselves there is little one can call novel or distinctively American, though there is a kind of thoroughness in embracing or working out certain political and social conceptions which is less common in England. As regards literature, nothing at present indicates the emergence of a new type. The influence of the great nations on one another grows always closer, and makes new national types less likely to appear. Science, which has no nationality, exerts a growing sway over men's minds, and exerts it contemporaneously and similarly in all civilized countries. For the purposes of thought, at least, if not of literary expression, the world draws closer together, and becomes more of a homogeneous community.

A visitor doubts whether the United States are, so far as the things of the mind are concerned, "a new country." The people have the hopefulness of youth. But their institutions are old, though many have been remodelled or new faced; their religion is old; their views of morality and conduct are old; their sentiments in matters of art and taste have not greatly diverged from those of the parent stock. Is the mere fact that they inhabit new territories, and that the conditions of life there have trained to higher efficiency certain gifts, and have left others in comparative quiescence, is this fact sufficient so to transform the national spirit as to make the products of their creative power essentially diverse from those of the same race abiding in its ancient seats? A transplanted tree may bear fruit of a slightly different flavour, but the apple remains an apple and the pear a pear.

However it is still too early in the growth of the United

States to form any conclusions on these high matters, almost too soon to speculate regarding them. There are causes at work which may in time produce a new type of intellectual life; but whether or not this come to pass, it can hardly be doubted that when the American people give themselves some repose from their present labours, when they occupy themselves less with doing and more with being, there will arise among them a literature and a science, possibly also, though later, an art, which will tell upon Europe with a new force. It will have behind it the momentum of hundreds of millions of men.

CHAPTER CIX

THE ABSENCE OF A CAPITAL

THE United States are the only great country in the world which has no capital. Germany and Italy were long without one, because the existence of the mediæval Empire prevented the growth in either country of a national monarchy. But the wonderfully reconstructive age we live in has now supplied the want; and although Rome and Berlin still fall short of being to their respective states what Paris and London are to France and England, what Vienna and Pesth are to the Dual Monarchy, they bid fair to attain a similar rank[1] in their respective nations. By a Capital I mean a city which is not only the seat of political government, but is also by the size, wealth, and character of its population the head and centre of the country, a leading seat of commerce and industry, a reservoir of financial resources, the favoured residence of the great and powerful, the spot in which the chiefs of the learned professions are to be found, where the most potent and widely-read journals are published, whither men of literary and scientific capacity are drawn. The heaping together in such a place of these various elements of power, the conjunction of the forces of rank, wealth, knowledge, intellect, naturally makes such a city a sort of foundry in which opinion is melted and cast, where it receives that definite shape in which it can be easily and swiftly propagated and diffused through the whole country, deriving not only an authority from the position of those who form it but a momentum from the weight of numbers in the community whence it comes. The opinion of such a city becomes powerful politically because it is that of the persons who live at headquarters, who hold the strings of government in their hands, who either themselves rule the state or are in close contact with those who do. It is true that under a representative government power rests with those whom the people have sent up from all parts of the country. Still these members of the legislature reside in the capital, and cannot but feel the steady pressure of its prevailing sentiment which touches them socially at every point. It sometimes happens that the populace of the capital, by their power of overawing the rulers or perhaps of effecting a revolution, are able to turn the fortunes of the state. But even where no such peril is to be apprehended, any nation with the kind of a capital I am describing, acquires the habit of looking to it for light and leading, and is apt to yield to it an initiative in political movements.

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[1] Athens, Lisbon, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Brussels, are equally good instances among the smaller countries. In Switzerland, Bern has not reached the same position, because Switzerland is a federation, and, so to speak, an artificial country made by history. Zurich, Lausanne, and Geneva are intellectually quite as influential. So Holland retains traces of her federal condition in the relatively less important position of Amsterdam. Madrid being a modern city placed in a country more recently and less perfectly consolidated than most of the other states of Europe, is less of a capital to Spain than Lisbon is to Portugal or Paris to France.

In the field of art and literature the influence of a great capital is no less marked. It gathers to a centre the creative power of the country, and subjects it to the criticism of the best instructed and most polished society. The constant action and reaction upon one another of groups of capable men in an atmosphere at once stimulative to invention and corrective of extravagance may give birth to works which isolated genius could hardly have produced. Goethe made this observation as regards Paris, contrasting the centralized society of France with the dispersion of the elements of culture over the wide area of his own Germany.

> "Now conceive a city like Paris, where the highest talents of a great kingdom are all assembled in a single spot, and by daily intercourse, strife, and emulation, mutually instruct and advance each other; where the best works, both of nature and art, from all kingdoms of the earth, are open to daily inspection,—conceive this metropolis of the world, I say, where every walk across a bridge or across a square recalls some mighty past, and where some historical event is connected with every corner of a street. In addition to all this, conceive not the Paris of a dull spiritless time, but the Paris of the nineteenth century, in which, during three generations, such men as Molière, Voltaire, Diderot, and the like, have kept up such a current of intellect as cannot be found twice in a single spot on the whole world, and you will comprehend that a man of talent like Ampère, who has grown up amid such abundance, can easily be something in his four-and-twentieth year."[1]

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[1] *Conversations with Eckermann.*

The same idea of the power which a highly-polished and strenuously active society has to educe and develop brilliant gifts underlies the memorable description which Pericles gives of Athens. And the influence of such a society may be contemplated with the greater satisfaction because it does not necessarily impoverish the rest of a country. The centralization of intellectual life may tend to diminish the chances of variability, and establish too uniform a type; but it probably gives a higher efficiency to the men of capacity whom it draws into its own orbit than they could have attained in the isolation of their natal spot.

In the case both of politics and of literature, the existence of a capital tends to strengthen the influence of what is called Society, that is to say, of the men of wealth and leisure who have time to think of other matters than the needs of daily life, and whose company and approval are apt to be sought by the men of talent. Thus where the rich and great are gathered in one spot to which the nation looks, they effect more in the way of guiding its political thought and training its literary taste than is possible where they are dispersed over the face of a large country. In both points, therefore, it will evidently make a difference to a democratic country whether it has a capital, and what degree of deference that capital receives. Paris is the extreme case of a city which has been everything to the national literature and art, and has sought to be everything in national politics also. London, since the decline of Dublin and of Edinburgh, has stood without a British rival in the domain of art and letters, and although one can hardly say that a literary society exists in London, most of the people who employ themselves in writing books and nearly all those who paint pictures live in or near it. Over politics London has less authority than Paris has exerted in France, doubtless because parts of the north and west of Britain are more highly vitalized than the provinces of France, while the English city is almost too populous to have a common feeling. Its very hugeness makes it amorphous.

What are the cities of the United States which can claim to approach nearest to the sort of capital we have been considering? Not Washington, though it is the meeting-place of Congress and the seat of Federal administration. It has a relatively small population (in 1880, 147,293, of whom one-third were negroes). Society consists of congressmen (for about half the year), officials, diplomatists, and some rich and leisured people who come to spend the winter. The leaders of finance, industry, commerce, and the professions are absent; there are few men of letters, no artists, hardly any journalists. What is called the "society" of Washington, which, being small, polished, and composed of people who constantly meet one another, is agreeable, and not the less agreeable because it has a peculiar flavour, is so far from aspiring to political authority as to deem it "bad form" to talk politics.[1]

Not New York, though it is now by far the most populous city. It is the centre of commerce, the sovereign of finance. But it has no special political influence or power beyond that of casting a large vote, which is an important factor in determining the thirty-six presidential votes of the State. Business is its main occupation: the representatives of literature are few; the journals, although certainly among the ablest and most widely read in the country, are, after all, New York journals, and not, like those of Paris, London, or even Berlin, professedly written for the whole nation. Next comes Philadelphia, once the first city in the Union, but now standing below New York in all the points just mentioned, with even less claim to be deemed a centre of art or opinion. Boston was for a time the chosen home of letters and culture, and still contains, in proportion to her population, a larger number of men and women capable of making or judging good work than any other city. But she can no longer be said to lead abstract thought much less current opinion. Chicago combines a vast and growing population with a central position: she is in some respects more of a typical American city than any of the others I have named. But Chicago, so far as political initiative goes, has no more weight than what the number of her voters represents, and in art or literature is nowhere. Nor does any one of these cities seem on the way to gain a more commanding position. New York will probably retain her pre-eminence in population and commercial consequence, but she does not rise proportionately in culture, while the centre of political gravity, shifting ever more and more to the West, will doubtless finally fix itself in the Mississippi valley.[2]

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[1] Washington being situated in the Federal District of Columbia is not a part of any State, and therefore enjoys no share in the Federal government. A resident in it is unenfranchised for all but certain local purposes: he can vote neither for a member of Congress nor for presidential electors, and the city is governed by a Federal Commission.

[2] A leading New York paper says (March 1888), "In no capital that we know of does the cause of religion and morality derive so little support against

It deserves to be remarked that what is true of the whole country is also true of the great sections of the country. Of the cities I have named, none, except possibly Boston and San Francisco, can be said to be even a local capital, either for purposes of political opinion or of intellectual movement and tendency. Boston retains her position as the literary centre of New England: San Francisco by her size has a preponderating influence on the Pacific coast. But no other great city is regarded by the inhabitants of her own and the adjoining States as their natural head, to which they look for political guidance, or from which they expect any intellectual stimulance. Even New Orleans, though by far the largest place in the South, is in no sense the metropolis of the South; and does little more for the South than set a conspicuous example of municipal misgovernment to the surrounding commonwealths. Though no Paris, no Berlin stands above them, these great American cities are not more important in the country, or even in their own sections of the country, than Lyons and Bordeaux are in France, Hamburg and Cologne in Germany. Even as between municipal communities, even in the sphere of thought and literary effort, equality and local independence have in America their perfect work.

The geographical as well as political causes that have produced this equality are obvious enough, and only one needs special mention. The seat of Federal government was in 1790 fixed at a place which was not even a village, but a piece of swampy woodland,[1] not merely for the sake of preventing the national legislature from being threatened by the mob of a great city, but because the jealousies of the States made it necessary to place the legislature in a spot exempt from all State influence or jurisdiction. So too in each State the seat of government is

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luxury from intellectual interest or activity of any description. This interest has its place here, but it leads a sickly existence as yet under the shadow of great wealth which cares not for it." This remark applies with equal force to Chicago and San Francisco, probably less to Baltimore, and still less to Boston and some of the smaller cities.

[1] Congress, however, did not remove from Philadelphia to the banks of the Potomac until 1800. Thomas Moore's lines on Washington as he saw it in 1804 deserve to be quoted:—

"An embryo capital where Fancy sees
Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees;
Where second-sighted seers the plain adorn
With fanes unbuilt and heroes yet unborn,
Though nought but woods and Jefferson they see.
Where streets should run, and sages ought to be."

rarely to be found in the largest city. Albany, not New York, is the capital of New York State; Springfield, not Chicago, of Illinois; Sacramento, not San Francisco, of California; Columbus, not Cincinnati, of Ohio; Harrisburg, not Philadelphia, of Pennsylvania. And this has been so ordered less from fear of the turbulence of a vast population than from the jealousy which the rural districts and smaller cities feel of the place which casts the heaviest vote, and is likely to seek to use the State resources for its own benefit.

It is a natural result of the phenomena described that in the United States public opinion crystallizes both less rapidly and in less sharp and well-defined forms than happens in those European countries which are led by the capital. The temperature of the fluid in which opinion takes shape (if I may venture to pursue the metaphor), is not so high all over a large country as in the society of a city, where the minds that make opinion are in daily contact, and the process by which opinion is made is therefore slower, giving a somewhat more amorphous product. I do not mean that a European capital generates opinion of one type only; but that each doctrine, each programme, each type of views, whether political or economic or religious, is likely to assume in a capital its sharpest and most pronounced form, that form being taken up and propagated from the capital through the country. And this is one reason why Americans were the first to adopt the system of Conventions, mass meetings of persons belonging to a particular party or advocating a particular cause, gathered from every corner of the country to exchange their ideas and deliberate on their common policy.

It may be thought that in this respect the United States suffer from the absence of a centre of light and heat. Admitting that there is some loss, there are also some conspicuous gains. It is a gain that the multitude of no one city should be able to overawe the executive and the legislature, perhaps even to change the form of government, as Paris has so often done in France. It is a gain, for a democratic country, that the feeling of what is called Society—that is to say, of those who toil not, neither do they spin, who are satisfied with the world, and are apt to regard it as a place for enjoyment—should not become too marked and palpable in its influence on the members of the legislature and the administration, that it should rather be diffused over the nation and act insensibly upon other classes through the ordinary relations of private life than take visible shape as the voice of a number of wealthy families gathered in one spot, whose luxury may render them the objects of envy, and the target for invective. And although types of political view may form themselves less swiftly, though doctrines may be less systematic, programmes less fully reasoned out than when the brisk intelligence of groups gathered in a capital labours to produce them, they may, when they do finally emerge from the mind of the whole people, have a breadth and solidity proportioned to the slowness of their growth, and be more truly representative of all the classes, interests, and tendencies that exist within the nation.

How far the loss exceeds the gain as respects the speculative and artistic sides of intellectual effort, it is too soon to determine, for American cities are all the creatures of the last sixty years. That which Goethe admired in Paris is evidently impossible to the dispersed geniuses of America. On the other hand, that indraught of talent from the provinces to Paris which many thoughtful Frenchmen deplore, and which has become more unfortunate since Paris has grown to be the centre of amusement for the dissipated classes of Europe, is an experience which no other country need wish to undergo. Germany has not begun to produce more work or better work since she has given herself a capital; indeed, he who looks back over her annals since the middle of last century will think that so far as scholarship, metaphysics, and possibly even poetry are concerned, she gained from that very want of centralization which Goethe regretted. Great critics realize so vividly the defects of the system they see around them that they sometimes underrate the merits that go with those defects; as a late distinguished English man of letters wished that England possessed an Academy of Letters, at the absence of which most Englishmen, knowing how such an institution is apt to be perverted, are disposed to rejoice. It may be that in the next age American cities will profit by their local independence to develop varieties greater than they now exhibit, and will evolve diverse types of literary and artistic production. Europe will watch with curiosity the progress of an experiment which it is now too late for any of her great countries to try.

CHAPTER CX

AMERICAN ORATORY

ORATORY is an accomplishment in which Europeans believe that Americans excel; and that this is the opinion of the Americans themselves, although they are too modest to express it, may be gathered from the surprise they betray when they find an Englishman fluent before an audience. Fifty years ago they had the advantage (if it is an advantage) of much more practice than any European nation; but now, with democracy triumphant in England and France, the proportion of speeches and speaking to population is probably much the same in all three countries. Some observations on a form of effort which has absorbed a good deal of the talent of the nation, seem properly to belong to an account of its intellectual life.

Oratorical excellence may be said to consist in the combination of five aptitudes—

Invention, that is to say, the power of finding good ideas and weaving effective arguments.

Skill and taste in the choice of appropriate words.

Readiness in producing appropriate ideas and words at short notice.

Quickness in catching the temper and tendencies of the particular audience addressed.

Weight, animation, and grace in delivery.

Such excellence as the Americans possess, such superiority as they may claim over Englishmen, consists rather in the three latter of these than in the two former.

The substance of their speeches is not better than one finds in other countries, because substance depends on the intellectual resources of the speaker and on the capacity of the audience for appreciating worthy matter. Neither is the literary form better, that is to say, the ideas are not clothed in any choicer language.

But there is more fluency, more readiness, more self-possession. Being usually quicker and nimbler in mind than an Englishman, and feeling less embarrassed on his legs, an American is apt to see his point more clearly and to get at it by a more direct path. He is less frequently confused and clumsy, less prosy also, because his sympathy with the audience tells him when they begin to tire, and makes him sensible of the necessity of catching and holding their attention. I do not deny that American speakers sometimes weary the listener, but when they do so it is rather because the notions are commonplace and the arguments unsound than because, as might often happen in England, ideas of some value are tediously and pointlessly put. The English race has in America acquired a keener sensitiveness of sympathy. That habit of deference to others, and that desire to be in accord with the sentiments of others, which equality and democratic institutions foster, make the American feel himself more completely one of the audience and a partaker of its sentiments than an average English speaker does. This may have the consequence, if the audience be ignorant or prejudiced, of dragging him down to its level. But it makes him more effective. Needless to add that humour, which is a commoner gift in America than elsewhere, often redeems an otherwise uninteresting address, and is the best means of keeping speaker and audience in touch with one another.

A deliberate and even slow delivery is the rule in American public speaking, as it is in private conversation. This has the advantage of making a story or a jest tell with more effect. There is also, I think, less stiffness and hesitation among American than among English speakers, greater skill in managing the voice, because more practice in open-air meetings, greater clearness of enunciation. But as regards grace, either in action or in manner, the Teutonic race shows no more capacity on the other side of the Atlantic than it has generally done in England for rivalling the orators of Italy, Spain, and France.

The commonest American defect is a turgid and inflated style. The rhetoric is Rhodian rather than Attic, overloaded with tropes and figures, apt to aim at concealing poverty or triteness in thought by exaggeration of statement, by a profusion of ornament, by appeals to sentiments too lofty for the subject or the occasion. The florid diction of the debating club or the solemn pomp of the funeral oration is frequently invoked when nothing but clearness of exposition or cogency of argument is needed. These faults have probably sprung from the practice of stump oratory, in which the temptation to rouse a multitude by declamation is specially strong. A man straining his voice in the open air is apt to strain his phrases also, and command attention by vehemence. They have been increased by the custom of having orations delivered on certain anniversaries, and especially on the Fourth of July, for on these great occasions the speaker feels bound to talk "his very tallest." Public taste, which was high in the days after the Revolution, when it was formed and controlled by a small number of educated men, began to degenerate in the first half of this century. Despite the influence of several orators of the first rank, incessant stump speaking and the inordinate vanity of the average audience brought a florid or inflated style into fashion, which became an easy mark for European satire. Of late years a reaction for the better seems to have set in. There indeed are still those who imitate Macaulay or Webster without the richness of the one or the stately strength of the other. The newspapers, in acknowledging that a lecturer is fluent or lucid, still complain if he is not also "eloquent." Commemorative addresses, which are far more abundant than in Europe, usually sin by over-finish of composition. But on the whole there is a manifest and steady improvement in the taste of listeners and in the style of speeches. Such improvement would be more rapid were it not for the enormous number of speeches by people who have really nothing to say, as well as by able men on occasions when there is nothing to be said which has not been said hundreds of times before. This is, of course, almost equally true of England, and indeed of all popularly governed countries. Those who run down popular government may fairly count profusion of speech as one of the drawbacks to democracy, and a drawback which shows no signs of disappearing.

As respects the different kinds of oratory, that of the pulpit seems to show an average slightly higher than in England. The visitor naturally hears the best preachers, for these are of course drawn to the cities, but whether he takes cities or rural districts he forms the impression that mere dulness and commonplace are less common than in Great Britain, though high excellence may be equally rare. Even when the discourse is read, it is read in a less mechanical way, and there is altogether more sense of the worth of vivacity and variety. The average length of sermons is a mean between the twenty minutes of an Anglican minister and the fifty minutes of Scotland. The manner is perhaps a trifle less conventional, because the American clergyman is less apt than his European brother to feel himself a member of a distinct caste.

Forensic oratory seems to stand neither higher nor lower than it does in England, whose bar is not at this moment adorned by any speakers whom men go to hear simply for the sake of their eloquence, as men flocked to listen to Erskine or Brougham or Follett. In America, as in England, there are many powerful advocates, but no consummate artist. Whether this is due to the failure of nature to produce persons specially gifted, or to the absence of trials whose issues and circumstances are calculated to rouse forensic ability to exceptional efforts, or to a change in public taste, and a disposition to prefer the practical to the showy, is a question which is often asked in England, and no easier to answer in America.

Congress, for reasons explained in the chapter treating of it, is a less favourable theatre for oratory than the great representative assemblies of Europe. The House of Representatives has at no period of its history shone with lights of eloquence, though a few of Clay's great speeches were delivered in it. There is some good short brisk debating in Committee of the Whole, but the set speeches are mostly pompous and heavy. The Senate has maintained a higher level, partly from the smaller size of its chamber, partly from its greater leisure, partly from the superior ability of its members. Webster's and Calhoun's greatest efforts were made on its floor, and produced an enormous effect on the nation. At present, however, the "full-dress debates" in the Senate are apt to want life, the long set speeches being fired off rather with a view to their circulation in the country than to any immediate effect on the assembly. But the ordinary discussions of bills, or questions of policy, reveal plenty of practical speaking power. If there be little passion and no brilliancy, there is strong common-sense put in a plain and telling form.

Of the forty-seven State and Territorial legislatures not much need be said. In them, as in the House of Representatives, the bulk of the work is done in committees, and the opportunities for displays of eloquence are limited, which it is well should be the case. They are good enough schools to form a practical business speaker, and they do form many such. But the characteristic merits and defects of transatlantic oratory are more fully displayed on the stump and in those national and State nominating conventions whereof I have already spoken. So far as the handling great assemblies is an art attainable by a man who does not possess the highest gifts of thought and imagination, it has been brought to perfection by the heroes of these mass meetings. They have learned how to deck out commonplaces with the gaudier flowers of eloquence; how to appeal to the dominant sentiment of the moment; above all, how to make a strong and flexible voice the means of rousing enthusiasm. They scathe the opposite party by vigorous invective: they interweave stories and jokes with their declamatory passages so as to keep the audience constantly amused. They deliver clap-trap with an air of hearty conviction. The party men who listen, because there are few present at a mass meeting, and still fewer at a convention, except members of the speaker's party, are better pleased with themselves than ever, and go away roused to effort in the party cause. But there has been little argument all through, little attempt to get hold of the reason and judgment of the people. Stimulation, and not instruction or conviction, is the aim which the stump orator sets before himself; and the consequence is that an election campaign is less educationally valuable than one conducted in England, by men much less practised and skilful in speaking, commonly proves to English electors. It is worth remarking that the custom which in England requires a representative to deliver at least once a year an address to his constituents, setting forth his view of the political situation and explaining his own speeches and votes during the preceding session, does not seem to exist in the United States. In fact the people of the Northern States receive less political instruction by the living voice than do those of England. When an instructive address has to be given, it takes the form of a lecture, and is usually delivered by some well-known public man, who receives a fee for it.

There are three kinds of speech which, though they exist in most European countries, have been so much more fully developed beyond the Atlantic as to deserve some notice.

The first of these is the Oration of the Occasion. When an anniversary comes round—and celebrations of an anniversary are very common in America—or when a sort of festival is held in honour of some public event, such for instance as the unveiling of a statue, or the erection of a monument on a battle-field, or the opening of a city hall or State capitol, or the driving the last spike of a great railroad, a large part of the programme is devoted to speaking. The chief speech is entrusted to one eminent person, who is called the Orator of the Day, and from whom is expected a long and highly-finished harangue, the length and finish of which are wearisome to a critical outsider, though the people of the locality are flattered. Sometimes these speeches contain good matter—I could mention instances where they have embodied personal recollections of a distinguished man in whose honour the celebration was being held—but the sort of artificial elevation at which the speaker usually feels bound to maintain himself is apt to make him pompous and affected.

Although public dinners are less frequent than in England, speeches of a complimentary and purely "epideictic" nature of the English public banquet type are very common. There is scarcely an occasion in life which brings forty or fifty people together on which a prominent citizen or a stranger from Europe is not called upon "to offer a few remarks." No subject is prescribed for him: often no toast has to be proposed or responded to:[1] he is simply put on his legs to talk upon anything in heaven or earth which may rise to his mind. The European who is at first embarrassed by this unchartered freedom, presently discovers its advantages, for it enables him so to construct his speech as to lead up to whatever joke, or point, or complimentary observations he has ready at hand. There is also more opening for variety than the conventional uniformity of an English toast-list permits.

The third form of discourse specially characteristic of the United States is the Lecture. It is less frequent and less fashionable now than thirty years ago, partly from the rise of monthly magazines full of excellent matter, partly because other kinds of evening entertainment have become more accessible to people outside the great cities. But it is still far more frequent and more valuable as a means of interesting people in literary, scientific, and political questions than anywhere in Europe, except possibly in Edinburgh. And the art of lecturing has been developed in a corresponding measure. A discourse of this kind, whatever the merits of its substance, is usually well arranged, well composed to meet the taste of the audience, and above all, well delivered. Eminent Englishmen who go to lecture in America are frequently criticized as ignorant of what may be called the technical part of their business. They may know a great deal, it is said, but they do not know how much the audience knows, and assume a lower level of intelligence and knowledge than exists, with the result of displeasing the latter. They are monotonous in manner, and unskilled in elocution. The European lecturer, on the other hand, confesses himself annoyed not only by the irreverent comments of the press but by the apparent coldness of the audience, which, though it will applaud heartily at the end if well satisfied, refuses him the running encouragement of cheers, even when he invites them by pausing to drink a glass of water.

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[1] Of course there are often toasts given at public dinners; but they seem to be fewer in number than in England and more varied, more judiciously adapted to the special occasion.

This grave reserve in American listeners surprises Europeans,[1] especially those who have observed the excitability shown on presidential campaigns. It seems to arise from the practical turn of their minds as well as from their intelligence. In an election campaign it is necessary and expedient to give vent to one's feelings; in listening to a lecture it is not. One comes to be instructed or entertained, and comes with a critical habit formed by hearing many lectures as well as reading many books. Something may also be due to the large proportion of women in an American audience at lectures or other non-political occasions.

A stranger is on the whole inclined to think that the kind of oratory in which the Americans show to most advantage is neither the political kind, abundant as it is, nor the commemorative oration, assiduously as it is cultivated, but what may be called the lighter ornamental style, such as the after-dinner speech. The fondness of the people for anecdotes, and their skill in telling them, the general diffusion of humour, the readiness in catching the spirit of an occasion, all contribute to make their efforts in this direction more easy and happy than those of the English, while furnishing less temptation for the characteristic fault of a straining after effect. I have already observed that they shine in stump speaking, properly so called—that is, in speaking which rouses an audience but ought not to be reported. The reasons why their more serious platform and parliamentary oratory remains somewhat inferior to that of Europe are, over and above the absence of momentous issues, probably the same as those which have, though perhaps less in the great cities, affected the average of newspaper writing. In Europe the leading speakers and writers have nearly all belonged to the cultivated classes, and feeling themselves raised above their audiences, have been in the habit of obeying their own taste and that of their class rather than the appetite of those whom they addressed. In England, for instance, the standard of speaking by public men has been set by parliamentary debate, because till within the last few decades the leading men of the country had won their reputation in Parliament. They carried their parliamentary style with them into popular meetings, and aspirants of all classes imitated this style. It sometimes erred in being too formal and too prolix; but its taste was good, and its very plainness obliged the speaker to have solid matter. In America, on the other hand, stump oratory is older, or at least quite as old as, congressional oratory, and the latter has never gained that hold on the ideas and habits of the people which parliamentary debate held in England. Hence speaking has generally moved on a somewhat lower level, not but what there were brilliant popular orators in the first days of the Republic, like Patrick Henry, and majestic parliamentary orators like Daniel Webster in the next generation, but that the volume of stump speaking was so much greater than in England that the fashion could not be set by a few of the greatest men, but was determined by the capacities of the average man. The taste of the average man was not raised by the cultivated few to their own standard, but tended to lower the practice, and to some extent even the taste, of the cultivated few. To seem wiser or more refined than the multitude, to incur the suspicion of talking to the multitude *de haut en bas*, would have offended the sentiment of the country, and injured the prospects of a statesman. It is perhaps a confirmation of this view that, while pompousness has flourished in the West, the most polished speakers have generally belonged to New England, where the level of average taste and knowledge was exceptionally high. One of these speakers, the late Mr. Wendell Phillips, was in the opinion of competent critics, an opinion which those who remember his conversation will be inclined to agree with, one of the first orators of the present century, and not more remarkable for the finish than for the transparent simplicity of his style, which attained its highest effects by the most direct and natural methods.

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[1] A story is told of Edmund Kean acting before an audience in New England which he found so chilling that at last he refused to come on for the next scene unless some applause were given, observing that such a house was enough to extinguish Etna.

CHAPTER CXI

THE PLEASANTNESS OF AMERICAN LIFE

I HAVE never met a European of the upper or middle classes who did not express astonishment when told that America was a more agreeable place than Europe to live in. "For working men," he would answer, "yes; but for men of education or property, how can a new rough country, where nothing but business is talked and the refinements of life are only just beginning to appear, how can such a country be compared with England, or France, or Italy?"

It is nevertheless true that there are elements in the life of the United States which may well make a European of any class prefer to dwell there rather than in the land of his birth. Let us see what they are.

In the first place there is the general prosperity and material well-being of the mass of the inhabitants. In Europe, if an observer takes his eye off his own class and considers the whole population of any one of the greater countries (for I except Switzerland and parts of Scandinavia and Portugal), he will perceive that by far the greater number lead very laborious lives, and are, if not actually in want of the necessaries of existence, yet liable to fall into want, the agriculturists when nature is harsh, the wage-earners when work is scarce. In England the lot of the labourer has been hitherto a hard one, incessant field toil, with rheumatism at fifty and the workhouse at the end of the vista; while the misery massed in such cities as London, Liverpool, and Glasgow is only too well known. In France there is less pauperism, but nothing can be more pinched and sordid than the life of the bulk of the peasantry. In the great towns of Germany there is constant distress and increasing discontent. The riots of 1886 in Belgium told an even more painful tale of the wretchedness of the miners and artisans there. In

Italy the condition of the rural population of Lombardy and Venetia as well as of the southern provinces seems to grow worse, and fills her statesmen with alarm. Of Russia, with her eighty millions of ignorant peasants living in half-barbarism, there is no need to speak. Contrast any one of these countries with the United States, where the working classes are as well fed, clothed, and lodged as the lower middle-class in Europe, and the farmers who till their own land (as nearly all do) much better, where a good education is within the reach of the poorest, where the opportunities for getting on in one way or another are so abundant that no one need fear any physical ill but disease or the results of his own intemperance. Pauperism already exists and increases in some of the larger cities, where drink breeds misery, and where recent immigrants, with the shiftlessness of Europe still clinging round them, are huddled together in squalor. But outside these few cities one sees nothing but comfort. In Connecticut and Massachusetts the operatives in many a manufacturing town lead a life far easier, far more brightened by intellectual culture and by amusements, than that of the clerks and shopkeepers of England or France. In cities like Cleveland or Chicago one finds miles on miles of suburb filled with neat wooden houses, each with its tiny garden plot, owned by the shop assistants and handicraftsmen who return on the horse cars in the evening from their work. All over the wide West, from Lake Ontario to the Upper Missouri, one travels past farms of two to three hundred acres, in every one of which there is a spacious farmhouse among orchards and meadows, where the farmer's children grow up strong and hearty on abundant food, the boys full of intelligence and enterprise, ready to push their way on farms of their own or enter business in the nearest town, the girls familiar with the current literature of England as well as of America. The life of the new emigrant in the further West has its privations in the first years, but it is brightened by hope, and has a singular charm of freedom and simplicity. The impression which this comfort and plenty makes is heightened by the brilliance and keenness of the air, by the look of freshness and cleanness which even the cities wear, all of them except the poorest parts of those few I have referred to above. The fog and soot-flakes of an English town, as well as its squalor, are wanting; you are in a new world, and a world which knows the sun. It is impossible not to feel warmed, cheered, invigorated by the sense of such material well-being all around one, impossible not to be infected by the buoyancy and hopefulness of the people. The wretchedness of Europe lies far behind; the weight of its problems seems lifted from the mind. As a man suffering from depression feels the clouds roll away from his spirit when he meets a friend whose good humour and energy present the better side of things and point the way through difficulties, so the sanguine temper of the Americans, and the sight of the ardour with which they pursue their aims, stimulates a European, and makes him think the world a better place than it had seemed amid the entanglements and sufferings of his own hemisphere.

To some Europeans this may seem fanciful. I doubt if any European can realize till he has been in America how much difference it makes to the happiness of any one not wholly devoid of sympathy with his fellow-beings, to feel that all round him, in all classes of society and all parts of the country, there exist in such ample measure so many of the external conditions of happiness: abundance of the necessaries of life, easy command of education and books, amusements and leisure to enjoy them, comparatively few temptations to intemperance and vice.

The second charm of American life is one which some Europeans will smile at. It is social equality. To many Europeans—to Germans, let us say, or Englishmen—the word has an odious sound. It suggests a dirty fellow in a blouse elbowing his betters in a crowd, or an ill-conditioned villager shaking his fist at the parson and the squire; or, at any rate, it suggests obtrusiveness and bad manners. The exact contrary is the truth. Equality improves manners, for it strengthens the basis of all good manners, respect for other men and women simply as men and women, irrespective of their station in life. Probably the assertion of social equality was one of the causes which injured American manners forty years ago, for that they were then bad among townsfolk can hardly be doubted in face of the testimony, not merely of sharp tongues like Mrs. Trollope's, but of calm observers like Sir Charles Lyell and sympathetic observers like Richard Cobden. In those days there was an obtrusive self-assertiveness among the less refined classes, especially towards those who, coming from the Old World, were assumed to come in a patronizing spirit. Now, however, social equality has grown so naturally out of the circumstances of the country, has been so long established, and is so ungrudgingly admitted, that all excuse for obtrusiveness has disappeared. People meet on a simple and natural footing, with more frankness and ease than is possible in countries where every one is either looking up or looking down.[1] There is no servility on the part of the humbler, and if now and then a little of the "I am as good as you" rudeness be perceptible, it is almost sure to proceed from a recent immigrant, to whom the attitude of simple equality has not yet become familiar as the evidently proper attitude of one man to another. There is no condescension on the part of the more highly placed, nor is there even that sort of scrupulously polite coldness which one might think they would adopt in order to protect their dignity. They have no cause to fear for their dignity, so long as they do not themselves forget it. And the fact that your shoemaker or your factory hand addresses you as an equal does not prevent him from respecting, and showing his respect for, all such superiority as your birth or education or eminence in any line of life may entitle you to receive.

This naturalness of intercourse is a distinct addition to the pleasure of social life. It enlarges the circle of possible friendship, by removing the *gêne* which in most parts of Europe persons of different ranks feel in exchanging their thoughts on any matters save those of business. It raises the humbler classes without lowering the upper; indeed, it improves the upper no less than the lower by expunging that latent insolence which deforms the manners of so many of the European rich or great. It relieves women in particular, who in Europe are specially apt to think of class distinctions, from that sense of constraint and uneasiness which is produced by the knowledge that other women with whom they come in contact are either looking down on them, or at any rate trying to gauge and determine their social position. It expands the range of a man's sympathies, and makes it easier for him to enter into the sentiments of other classes than his own. It gives a sense of solidarity to the whole nation, cutting away the ground for all sorts of jealousies and grudges which distract people, so long as the social pretensions of past centuries linger on to be resisted and resented by the levelling spirit of a revolutionary age. And I have never heard native Americans speak of any drawbacks corresponding to and qualifying these benefits.

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[1] A trifling anecdote may illustrate what I mean. In a small Far Western town the stationmaster lent me a locomotive to run a few miles out along the railway to see a remarkable piece of scenery. The engine took me and dropped me there, as I wished to walk back, much to the surprise of the driver and stoker, for in America no one walks if he can help it. The same evening, as I was sitting in the hall of the hotel, I was touched on the arm, and turning round found myself accosted by a well-mannered man, who turned out to be the engine-driver. He expressed his regret that the locomotive had not been cleaner and better "fixed up," as he would have liked to make my trip as agreeable as possible, but the notice given him had been short. He talked with intelligence, and we had some pleasant chat together. It was fortunate that I had resisted in the forenoon the British impulse to bestow a gratuity.

There are, moreover, other rancours besides those of social inequality whose absence from America brightens it to a European eye. There are no quarrels of churches and sects. Judah does not vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim envy Judah. No Established Church looks down scornfully upon Dissenters from the height of its titles and endowments, and talks of them as hindrances in the way of its work. No Dissenters pursue an Established Church in a spirit of watchful jealousy, nor agitate for its overthrow. One is not offended by the contrast between the theory and the practice of a religion of peace, between professions of universal affection in pulpit addresses and forms of prayer, and the acrimony of clerical controversialists. Still less, of course, is there that sharp opposition and antagonism of Christians and anti-Christians which lacerates the private as well as public life of France. Rivalry between sects appears only in the innocent form of the planting of new churches and raising of funds for missionary objects, while most of the Protestant denominations, including the four most numerous, constantly fraternize in charitable work. Between Roman Catholics and Protestants there is little hostility, and sometimes co-operation for a philanthropic purpose. The sceptic is no longer under a social ban, and discussions on the essentials of Christianity and of theism are conducted with good temper. There is not a country in the world where Frederick the Great's principle, that every one should be allowed to go to heaven his own way, is so fully applied. This sense of religious peace as well as religious freedom all around one is soothing to the weary European, and contributes not a little to sweeten the lives of ordinary people.

I come last to the character and ways of the Americans themselves, in which there is a certain charm, hard to convey by description, but felt almost as soon as one sets foot on their shore, and felt constantly thereafter. They are a kindly people.

Good nature, heartiness, a readiness to render small services to one another, an assumption that neighbours in the country, or persons thrown together in travel, or even in a crowd, were meant to be friendly rather than hostile to one another, seem to be everywhere in the air, and in those who breathe it. Sociability is the rule, isolation and moroseness the rare exception. It is not merely that people are more vivacious or talkative than an Englishman expects to find them, for the Western man is often taciturn and seldom wreathes his long face into a smile. It is rather that you feel that the man next you, whether silent or talkative, does not mean to repel intercourse, or convey by his manner his low opinion of his fellow-creatures. Everybody seems disposed to think well of the world and its inhabitants, well enough at least to wish to be on easy terms with them and serve them in those little things whose trouble to the doer is small in proportion to the pleasure they give to the receiver. To help others is better recognized as a duty than in Europe. Nowhere is money so readily given for any public purpose; nowhere, I suspect, are there so many acts of private kindness done, such, for instance, as paying the college expenses of a promising boy, or aiding a widow to carry on her husband's farm; and these are not done with ostentation. People seem to take their own troubles more lightly than they do in Europe, and to be more indulgent to the faults by which troubles are caused. It is a land of hope, and a land of hope is a land of good humour. And they have also, though this is a quality more perceptible in women than in men, a remarkable faculty for enjoyment, a power of drawing more happiness from obvious pleasures, simple and innocent pleasures, than one often finds in overburdened Europe.

As generalizations like this are necessarily comparative, I may be asked with whom I am comparing the Americans. With the English, or with some attempted average of European nations? Primarily I am comparing them with the English, because they are the nearest relatives of the English. But there are other European countries, such as France, Belgium, Spain, in which the sort of cheerful friendliness I have sought to describe is less common than it is in America. Even in Germany and German Austria, simple and kindly as are the masses of the people, the upper classes have that *roideur* which belongs to countries dominated by an old aristocracy, or by a plutocracy trying to imitate aristocratic ways. The upper class in America (if one may use such an expression) has not in this respect differentiated itself from the character of the nation at large.

If the view here presented be a true one, to what causes are we to ascribe this agreeable development of the original English type, a development in whose course the sadness of Puritanism seems to have been shed off?

Perhaps one of them is the humorous turn of the American character. Humour is a sweetener of temper, a copious spring of charity, for it makes the good side of bad things even more visible than the weak side of good things: but humour in Americans may be as much a result of an easy and kindly turn as their kindliness is of their humour. Another is the perpetuation of a habit of mutual help formed in colonial days. Colonists need one another's aid more constantly than the dwellers in an old country, are thrown more upon one another, even when they live scattered in woods or prairies, are more interested in one another's welfare. When you have only three neighbours within five miles, each of them covers a large part of your horizon. You want to borrow a plough from one; you get another to help you to roll your logs; your children's delight is to go over for an evening's merrymaking to the lads and lasses of the third. It is much pleasanter to be on good terms with these few neighbours, and when others come one by one, they fall into the same habits of intimacy. Any one who has read those stories of rustic New England or New York life which delighted the English children of thirty years ago—I do not know whether they delight children still, or have been thrown aside for more highly-spiced food—will remember the warm-hearted simplicity and atmosphere of genial goodwill which softened the roughness of peasant manners and tempered the sternness of a Calvinistic creed. It is natural that the freedom of intercourse and sense of interdependence which existed among the early settlers, and which have always existed since among the pioneers of colonization in the West as they moved from the Connecticut to the Mohawk, from the Mohawk to the Ohio, from the Ohio to the Mississippi, should have left on the national character traces not effaced even in the more artificial civilization of our own time. Something may be set down to the feeling of social equality, creating that respect for a man as a man, whether he be rich or poor, which was described a few pages back; and something to a regard for the sentiment of the multitude, a sentiment which forbids any man to stand aloof in the conceit of self-importance, and holds up geniality and good fellowship as almost the first of social virtues. I do not mean that a man consciously suppresses his impulses to selfishness or gruffness because he knows that his faults will be ill regarded; but that, having grown up in a society which is infinitely powerful as compared with the most powerful person in it, he has learnt to realize his individual insignificance, as members of the upper class in Europe never do, and has become permeated by the feeling which this society entertains—that each one's duty is not only to accept equality, but also to relish equality, and to make himself pleasant to his equals. Thus the habit is formed even in natures of no special sweetness, and men become kindly by doing kindly acts.

Whether, however, these suggestions be right or wrong, there is, I think, no doubt as to the fact which they attempt to explain. I do not, of course, give it merely as the casual impression of European visitors, whom a singularly frank and ready hospitality welcomes and makes much of. I base it on the reports of European friends who have lived for years in the United States, and whose criticism of the ways and notions of the people is keen enough to show that they are no partial witnesses.

CHAPTER CXII

THE UNIFORMITY OF AMERICAN LIFE

To the pleasantness of American life there is one, and only one, serious drawback—its uniformity. Those who have been struck by the size of America, and by what they have heard of its restless excitement, may be surprised at the word. They would have guessed that an unquiet changefulness and turmoil were the disagreeables to be feared But uniformity, which the European visitor begins to note when he has travelled for a month or two, is the feature of the country which Englishmen who have lived long there, and Americans who are familiar with Europe, most frequently revert to when asked to say what is the "crook in their lot."

It is felt in many ways. I will name a few.

It is felt in the aspects of Nature. All the natural features of the United States are on a larger scale than those of Europe. The four great mountain chains are each of them longer than the Alps.[1] Of the gigantic rivers and of those inland seas we call the Great Lakes one need not speak. The centre of the continent is occupied by a plain larger than the western half of Europe. In the Mississippi valley, from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Superior, there is nothing deserving to be called a hill, though, as one moves westward from the great river, long soft undulations in the great prairie begin to appear. Through vast stretches of country one finds the same physical character maintained with little change—the same strata, the same vegetation, a generally similar climate. From the point where you leave the Alleghanies at Pittsburg, until after crossing the Missouri, you approach the still untilled prairie of the West, a railway run of some thousand miles, there is a uniformity of landscape greater than could be found along any one hundred miles of railway run in Western Europe. Everywhere the same nearly flat country, over which you cannot see far, because you are little raised above it, the same fields and crops, the same rough wooden fences, the same thickets of the same bushes along the stream edges, with here and there a bit of old forest; the same solitary farmhouses and straggling wood-built villages. And when one has passed beyond the fields and farmhouses, there is an even more unvaried stretch of slightly rolling prairie, smooth and bare, till after five hundred miles the blue line of the Rocky Mountains rises upon the western horizon.

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[1] The Alleghanies, continued in the Green and White Mountains, the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevada, continued in the Cascade Range, and the Coast Range which borders the Pacific.

There are some extraordinary natural phenomena, such as Niagara, the Yellowstone Geysers, and the great cañon of the Colorado river, which Europe cannot equal. But taking the country as a whole, and remembering that it is a continent, it is not more rich in picturesque beauty than the much smaller western half of Europe. There is a good deal of pretty scenery and a few really romantic spots in the long Alleghany range, but hardly anything so charming as the best bits of Scotland or southern Ireland, or the English lakes. The Rocky Mountains are pierced by some splendid gorges, such as the famous cañon of the Arkansas River above South Pueblo, and show some very grand prospects, such as that over the Great Salt Lake from the Mormon capital. But neither the Rocky Mountains, with their dependent ranges, nor the Sierra Nevada, can be compared for variety of grandeur and beauty with the Alps; for although each chain nearly equals the Alps in height, and covers a greater area, they have little snow, no glaciers,[1] and a singular uniformity of character. One finds, I think, less variety in the whole chain of the Rockies than in the comparatively short Pyrenees. There are indeed in the whole United States very few quite first-rate pieces of mountain scenery rivalling the best of the Old World. The most impressive are, I think, two or three of the deep valleys of the Sierra Nevada (of which the Yo Semite is the best known), and the superb line of extinct volcanoes, bearing snow-fields and glaciers, which one sees, rising out of vast and sombre forests, from the banks of the Columbia

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[1] There are a few inconsiderable glaciers in the northernmost part of the Rocky Mountains, and a small one on Mount Shasta.

River and the shores of Puget Sound.[1] So the Atlantic coast, though there are pretty bits between Newport and the New Brunswick frontier, cannot vie with the coasts of Scotland, Ireland, or Norway; while southward from New York to Florida it is everywhere flat and generally dreary. In the United States people take journeys proportionate to the size of the country. A family thinks nothing of going twelve hundred miles, from St. Louis to Cape May (near Philadelphia), for a sea-side holiday. But even journeys of twelve hundred miles do not give an American so much change of scene and variety of surroundings as a Parisian has when he goes to Nice, or a Berliner to Berchtesgaden. The man who lives in the section of America which seems destined to contain the largest population, I mean the States on the Upper Mississippi, lives in the midst of a plain wider than the plains of Russia, and must travel hundreds of miles to escape from its monotony.

When we turn from the aspects of Nature to the cities of men, the uniformity is even more remarkable. With five or six exceptions to be mentioned presently, American cities differ from one another only herein that some of them are built more with brick than with wood, and others more with wood than with brick. In all else they are alike, both great and small. In all the same wide streets, crossing at right angles, ill-paved, but planted along the side walks with maple-trees whose autumnal scarlet surpasses the brilliance of any European foliage.[2] In all the same shops, arranged on the same plan, the same Chinese laundries, with Li Kow visible through the window, the same ice-cream stores, the same large hotels with seedy men hovering about in the dreary entrance-hall, the same street cars passing to and fro with passengers clinging to the door-step, the same locomotives ringing their great bells as they clank slowly down the middle of the street. I admit that in external aspect there is a sad monotony in the larger towns of England also. Compare English cities with Italian cities, and most of the former seem like one another, incapable of being, so to speak, individualized as you individualize a man with a definite character and aspect unlike that of other men. Take the Lancashire towns, for instance, large and prosperous places. You cannot individualize Bolton or Wigan, Oldham or Bury, except by trying to remember that Bury is slightly less rough than Oldham, and Wigan a thought more grimy than Bolton. But in Italy every city has its character, its memories, its life and achievements wrought into the pillars of its churches and the towers that stand along its ramparts. Siena is not like Perugia, nor Perugia like Orvieto; Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Ancona, Osimo, standing along the same coast within seventy miles of one another, have each of them a character, a sentiment, what one may call an idiosyncrasy, which comes vividly back to us at the mention of its name. Now, what English towns are to Italian, that American towns are to English. They are in some ways pleasanter; they are cleaner, there is less poverty, less squalor, less darkness. But their monotony haunts one like a nightmare. Even the irksomeness of finding the streets named by numbers becomes insufferable. It is doubtless convenient to know by the number how far up the city the particular street is. But you cannot give any sort of character to Twenty-ninth Street, for the name refuses to lend itself to any association. There is something wearisomely hard and bare in such a system.

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[1] I have been obliged by want of space to omit the chapters which were intended to describe the scenery of the United States and conjecture its probable future influence on the character of the people.

Nothing is further from my mind than to attempt to disparage the scenery of the Great West, which contains, from the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, many very striking and impressive points. I only say that they are less beautiful than the Alps, just as the mountains of Asia Minor, even when equal or superior in height, are less beautiful, and largely for the same reason. They are much drier, and have therefore fewer streams and less variety and wealth of vegetation, the upper zone of the Sierra Nevada excepted; and the Rockies, as they run north and south, present less of a contrast between their two sides than do the northern and southern declivities of the Alps or the Caucasus.

[2] In the newer cities one set of parallel streets is named by numbers, the others, which cross them at right angles, are in some instances, as in New York, called avenues, and so numbered. In Washington the avenues are called after States, and of the two sets of streets (which the avenues cross obliquely), one is called by numbers, the other by the letters of the alphabet.

I return joyfully to the exceptions. Boston has a character of her own, with her beautiful Common, her smooth environing waters, her Beacon Hill crowned by the gilded dome of the State House, and Bunker Hill, bearing the monument of the famous fight. New York, besides a magnificent position, has in the grandeur of the buildings and the tremendous rush of men and vehicles along the streets as much the air of a great capital as London itself. Chicago, with her enormous size and the splendid warehouses that line her endless thoroughfares, leaves a strong though not wholly agreeable impression. Richmond has a quaint old-world look which dwells in the memory: few cities have a sea front equal in beauty to the lake front of Cleveland. Washington, with its wide and beautifully-graded avenues, and the glittering white of the stately Capitol, has become within the last twenty years a singularly handsome city. And New Orleans —or rather the Creole quarter of New Orleans, for the rest of the city is commonplace—is delicious, suggesting old France and Spain, yet a France and Spain strangely transmuted in this new clime. I have seen nothing in America more picturesque than the Rue Royale, with its houses of all heights, often built round a courtyard, where a magnolia or an orange-tree stands in the middle, and wooden external staircases lead up to wooden galleries, the house fronts painted of all colours, and carrying double rows of balconies decorated with pretty ironwork, the whole standing languid and still in the warm soft air, and touched with the subtle fragrance of decay. Here in New Orleans the streets and public buildings, and specially the old City Hall, with the arms of Spain still upon it, speak of history. One feels, in stepping across Canal Street from the Creole quarter to the business parts of the town, that one steps from an old nationality to a new one, that this city must have had vicissitudes, that it represents something, and that something one of the great events of history, the surrender of the northern half of the New World by the Romano-Celtic races to the Teutonic. Quebec, and to a less degree Montreal, fifteen hundred miles away, tell the same tale: Santa Fé in New Mexico repeats it.

It is the absence in nearly all the American cities of anything that speaks of the past that makes their external aspect so unsuggestive. In pacing their busy streets and admiring their handsome city halls and churches, one's heart sinks at the feeling that nothing historically interesting ever has happened here, perhaps ever will happen. In many an English town, however ugly with its smoke and its new suburbs, one sees at least an ancient church, one can discover some fragments of a castle or a city wall. Even Wigan and Northampton have ancient churches, though Northampton lately allowed the North-Western Railway to destroy the last traces of the castle where Henry II. issued his Assize. But in America hardly any public building is associated with anything more interesting than a big party convention; and, nowadays even the big conventions are held in temporary structures, whose materials are sold when the politicians have dispersed. Nowhere, perhaps, does this sense of the absolute novelty of all things strike one so strongly as in San Francisco. Few cities in the world can vie with her either in the beauty or in the natural advantages of her situation; indeed, there are only two places in Europe—Constantinople and Gibraltar—that combine an equally perfect landscape with what may be called an equally imperial position. Before you there is the magnificent bay, with its far-stretching arms and rocky isles, and beyond it the faint line of the Sierra Nevada, cutting the clear air like mother-of pearl; behind there is the roll of the ocean, to the left, the majestic gateway between mountains through which ships bear in commerce from the farthest shores of the Pacific; to the right, valleys rich with corn and wine, sweeping away to the southern horizon. The city itself is full of bold hills, rising steeply from the deep water. The air is keen, dry, and bright, like the air of Greece, and the waters not less blue. Perhaps it is this air and light, recalling the cities of the Mediterranean, that make one involuntarily look up to the top of these hills for the feudal castle, or the ruins of the Acropolis, which one thinks must crown them. I found myself so looking all the time I remained in the city. But on none of these heights is there anything more interesting, anything more vocal to the student of the past, than the sumptuous villas of the magnates of the Central Pacific Railway, who have chosen a hill-top to display their wealth to the city, but have erected houses like all other houses, only larger. San Francisco has had a good deal of history in her forty years of life; but this history does not, like that of Greece or Italy, write itself in stone, or even in wood.

Of the uniformity of political institutions over the whole United States I have spoken already. Everywhere the same system of State governments, everywhere the same municipal governments, and almost uniformly bad or good in proportion to the greater or smaller population of the city; the same party machinery organized on the same methods, "run" by the same wirepullers and "workers." In rural local government there are some diversities in the names, areas, and functions of the different bodies, yet differences slight in comparison with the points of likeness. The schools are practically identical in organization, in the subjects taught, in the methods of teaching, though the administration of them is as completely decentralized as can be imagined, even the State commissioner having no right to do more than suggest or report. So it is with the charitable institutions, with the libraries, the lecture-courses, the public amusements. All these are more abundant and better of their kind in the richer and more cultivated parts of the country, generally better in the North Atlantic than in the inland States, and in the West than in the South. But they are the same in type everywhere. It is the same with social habits and usages. There are still some differences between the South and the North; and in the Eastern cities the upper class is more Europeanized in its code of etiquette and its ways of daily life. But even these variations tend to disappear. Eastern customs begin to permeate the West, beginning with the richer families; the South is more like the North than it was before the war. Travel where you will, you feel that what you have found in one place that you will find in another. The thing which hath been, will be: you can no more escape from it than you can quit the land to live in the sea.

Last of all we come to man himself—to man and to woman, not less important than man. The ideas of men and women, their fundamental beliefs and their superficial tastes, their methods of thinking and their fashions of talking, are what most concern their fellow-men; and if there be variety and freshness in these, the uniformity of nature and the monotony of cities signify but little. If I observe that in these respects also the similarity of type over the country is surprising, I shall be asked whether I am not making the old mistake of the man who fancied all Chinese were like one another, because, noticing the dress and the pigtail, he did not notice minor differences of feature. A scholar is apt to think that all business men write the same hand, and a business man thinks the same of all scholars. Perhaps Americans think all Englishmen alike. And I may also be asked with whom I am comparing the Americans. With Europe as a whole? If so, is it not absurd to expect that the differences between different sections in one people should be as marked as those between different peoples? The United States are larger than Europe, but Europe has many races and many languages, among whom contrasts far broader must be expected than between one people, even if it stretches over a continent.

It is most clearly not with Europe, but with each of the leading European peoples that we must compare the people of America. So comparing them with the people of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, one discovers more varieties between individuals in these European peoples than one finds in America. Scotchmen and Irishmen are more unlike Englishmen, the native of Normandy more unlike the native of Provence, the Pomeranian more unlike the Wurtemberger, the Piedmontese more unlike the Neapolitan, the Basque more unlike the Andalusian, than the American from any part of the country is to the American from any other. Differences of course there are between the human type as developed in different regions of the country,—differences moral and intellectual as well as physical. You can generally tell a Southerner by his look as well as by his speech. A native of Maine will probably differ from a native of Kentucky, a Georgian from an Oregonian. But these differences strike even an American observer much as the difference between a Yorkshireman and a Lancastrian strikes the English, and is slighter than the contrast between a middle-class southern Englishman and a middle-class Scotchman, slighter than the differences between a peasant from Northumberland and a peasant from Dorsetshire. Or, to take another way of putting it: If at some great gathering of a political party from all parts of the United Kingdom you were to go round and talk to, say, one hundred, taken at random, of the persons present, you would be struck by more diversity between the notions and the tastes and mental habits of the individuals comprising that one hundred than if you tried the same experiment with a hundred Americans of the same education and position, similarly gathered in a convention from every State in the Union.

I do not in the least mean that people are more commonplace in America than in England, or that the Americans are less ideal than the English. Neither of these statements would be true. On the contrary, the average American is more alive to new ideas, more easily touched through his imagination or his emotions, than the average Englishman or Frenchman. I mean only that the native-born Americans appear to vary less, in fundamentals, from what may be called the dominant American type than Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, or Italians do from any type which could be taken as the dominant type in any of those nations. Or, to put the same thing differently, it is rather more difficult to take any assemblage of attributes in any of these European countries and call it the national type than it is to do the like in the United States.

These are not given as the impressions of a traveller. Such impressions, being necessarily hasty, and founded on a comparatively narrow observation, would deserve little confidence. They sum up the conclusions of Europeans long resident in America, and familiar with different parts of the country. They are, I think, admitted by the most acute Americans themselves. I have often heard the latter dilate on what seems to them the one crowning merit of life in Europe—the variety it affords, the opportunities it gives of easy and complete changes of scene and environment. The pleasure which an American finds in crossing the Atlantic, a pleasure more intense than any which the European enjoys, is that of passing from a land of happy monotony into regions where everything is redolent with memories of the past, and derives from the past no less than from the present a wealth and a subtle complexity of interest which no new country can possess.

Life in America is in most ways pleasanter, easier, simpler than in Europe; it floats in a sense of happiness like that of a radiant summer morning. But life in any of the great European centres is capable of an intensity, a richness blended of many elements, which has not yet been reached in America. There are more problems in Europe calling for solution; there is more passion in the struggles that rage round them; the past more frequently kindles the present with a glow of imaginative light. In whichever country of Europe one dwells, one feels that the other countries are near, that the fortunes of their peoples are bound up with the fortunes of one's own, that ideas are shooting to and fro between them. The web of history woven day by day all over Europe is vast and of many colours: it is fateful to every European. But in America it is only the philosopher who can feel that it will ultimately be fateful to Americans also; to the ordinary man the Old World seems far off, severed by a dissociating ocean, its mighty burden with little meaning for him.

Those who have observed the uniformity I have been attempting to describe have commonly set it down, as Europeans do most American phenomena, to what they call Democracy. Democratic government has in reality not much to do with it, except in so far as such a government helps to induce that deference of individuals to the mass which strengthens a dominant type, whether of ideas, of institutions, or of manners. More must be ascribed to the equality of material conditions, still more general than in Europe, to the fact that nearly every one is engaged either in agriculture, or in commerce, or in some handicraft, to the extraordinary mobility of the population, which in migrating from one part of the country to another brings the characteristics of each part into the others, to the diffusion of education, to the cheapness of literature and universal habit of reading, which enable every one to know what every one else is thinking, but above all to the newness of the country, and the fact that four-fifths of it have been made all at a stroke, and therefore all of a piece, as compared with the slow growth by which European countries have developed. Newness is the cause of uniformity, not merely in the external aspect of cities, villages, farmhouses, but in other things also, for the institutions and social habits which belonged a century ago to a group of small communities on the Atlantic coast, have been suddenly extended over an immense area, each band of settlers naturally seeking to retain its customs, and to plant in the new soil shoots from which trees like those of the old home might spring up. The variety of European countries is due not only to the fact that their race-elements have not yet become thoroughly commingled, but also that many old institutions have survived among the new ones; as in a city that grows but slowly, old buildings are not cleared away to make room for others more suited to modern commerce, but are allowed to stand, sometimes empty and unused, sometimes half adapted to new purposes. This scarcely happens in America. Doubtless many American institutions are old, and were old before they were carried across the Atlantic. But they have generally received a new dress, which, in adapting them to the needs of to-day, conceals their ancient character; and the form in which they have been diffused or reproduced in the different States of the Union is in all those States practically identical.

In each of the great European countries the diversity of primeval and mediæval times, when endless varieties of race, speech, and faith existed within the space of a few hundred miles, has been more or less preserved by segregative influences. In America a small race, of the same speech and faith, has spread itself out over an immense area, and has been strong enough to impose its own type, not only on the Dutch and other early settlers of the middle States, but on the immigrant masses which the last forty years have brought.[1]

May one, then, expect that when novelty has worn off, and America counts her life by centuries instead of by decades, variety will develop itself, and such complexities, or diversities, or incongruities (whichever one is to call them) as European countries present, be deeper and more numerous?

As regards the outside of things this seems unlikely. Many of the small towns of to-day will grow into large towns, a few of the large towns into great cities, but as they grow they will not become less like one another. There will be larger theatres and hotels, more churches (in spite of secularist lecturers) and handsomer ones; but what is to make the theatres and churches of one city differ from those of another? Fashion and the immense facilities of intercourse tend to wear down even such diversities in the style of building or furnishing, or in modes of locomotion, or in amusements and forms of social intercourse, as now exist.

As regards ideas and the inner life of men, the question is a more difficult one. At present there are only two parts of the country where one looks to meet with the well-marked individualities I refer to. One of these is New England, where the spirit of Puritanism, expressed in new literary forms by Emerson and his associates, did produce a peculiar type of thinking and discoursing, which has now, however, almost died out; and where one still meets, especially among the cultivated classes, a larger number than elsewhere of persons who have thought and studied for themselves, and are unlike their fellows. The other part of the country is the Far West, where the wild life led by pioneers in exploration, or ranching, or gold-mining has produced a number of striking figures, men of extraordinary self-reliance, with a curious mixture of geniality and reckless hardihood, no less indifferent to their own lives than to the lives of others. Of preserving this latter type there is, alas, little hope; the swift march of civilization will have expunged it in thirty years more.

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[1] It may be thought that I have under-estimated the diversity already due to the presence of immigrants, and the greater diversity which the mingling of their blood with that of the native Americans will in time produce. However, in this chapter I am speaking of society as it now exists: and the recent immigrants have as yet affected it but little, save that the Germans have brought in a greater fondness for music, for the drama, and for out-of-door life in the cities. I greatly doubt whether the influence of the immigrants will be much more powerful in the future, so strong is the native type of thought and customs, and so quickly does it tell on the new-comers.

When one sees millions of people thinking the same thoughts and reading the same books, and perceives that as the multitude grows, its influence becomes always stronger, it is hard to imagine how new points of repulsion and contrast are to arise, new diversities of sentiment and doctrine to be developed. Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that as the intellectual proficiency and speculative play of mind which are now confined to a comparatively small class become more generally diffused, as the pressure of effort towards material success is relaxed, as the number of men devoted to science, art, and learning increases, so will the dominance of what may be called the business mind decline, and with a richer variety of knowledge, tastes, and pursuits, there will come also a larger crop of marked individualities, and of divergent intellectual types.

Time will take away some of the monotony which comes from the absence of historical associations: for even if, as is to be hoped, there comes no war to make battlefields famous like those of twenty-five years ago, yet literature and the lives of famous men cannot but attach to many spots associations to which the blue of distance will at last give a romantic interest. No people could be more ready than are the Americans to cherish such associations. Their country has a short past, but they willingly revere and preserve all the memories the past has bequeathed to them.

CHAPTER CXIII

THE TEMPER OF THE WEST

WESTERN AMERICA is one of the most interesting subjects of study the modern world has seen. There has been nothing in the past resembling its growth, and probably there will be nothing in the future. A vast territory, wonderfully rich in natural resources of many kinds; a temperate and healthy climate, fit for European labour; a soil generally, and in many places marvellously, fertile; in some regions mountains full of minerals, in others trackless forests where every tree is over two hundred feet high; and the whole of this virtually unoccupied territory thrown open to an energetic race, with all the appliances and contrivances of modern science at its command,—these are phenomena absolutely without precedent in history, and which cannot recur elsewhere, because our planet contains no such other favoured tract of country.

The Spaniards and Portuguese settled in tropical countries, which soon enervated them. They carried with them the poison of slavery; their colonists were separated, some by long land journeys, and all by still longer voyages from the centres of civilization. But the railway and the telegraph follow the Western American. The Greeks of the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ, who planted themselves all round the coasts of the Mediterranean, had always enemies, and often powerful enemies, to overcome before they could found even their trading stations on the coast, much less occupy the lands of the interior. In Western America the presence of the Indians has done no more than give a touch of romance or a spice of danger to the exploration of some regions, such as Western Dakota and Arizona, while over the rest of the country the unhappy aborigines have slunk silently away, scarcely even complaining of the robbery of lands and the violation of plighted faith. Nature and Time seem to have conspired to make the development of the Mississippi basin and the Pacific slope the swiftest, easiest, completest achievement in the whole record of the civilizing progress of mankind since the founder of the Egyptian monarchy gathered the tribes of the Nile under one government.

The details of this development and the statistics that illustrate it have been too often set forth to need re-statement here. It is of the character and temper of the men who have conducted it that I wish to speak, a matter which has received less attention, but is essential to a just conception of the Americans of to-day. For the West is the most American part of America; that is to say, the part where those features which distinguish America from Europe come out in the strongest relief. What Europe is to Asia, what England is to the rest of Europe, what America is to England, that the Western States and Territories are to the Atlantic States, the heat and pressure and hurry of life always growing as we follow the path of the sun. In Eastern America there are still quiet spots, in the valleys of the Alleghanies, for instance, in nooks of old New England, in university towns like Ithaca or Ann Arbor. In the West there are none. All is bustle, motion, and struggle, most so of course among the native Americans, yet even the immigrant from the secluded valleys of Thuringia, or the shores of some Norwegian fjord, learns the ways almost as readily as the tongue of the country, and is soon swept into the whirlpool.

It is the most enterprising and unsettled Americans that come West; and when they have left their old haunts, broken their old ties, resigned the comforts and pleasures of their former homes, they are resolved to obtain the wealth and success for which they have come. They throw themselves into work with a feverish yet sustained intensity. They rise early, they work all day, they have few pleasures, few opportunities for relaxation.[1] I remember in the young city of Seattle on Puget Sound to have found business in full swing at seven o'clock A.M.: the shops open, the streets full of people. Everything is speculative, land (or, as it is usually called, "real estate") most so, the value of lots of ground rising or falling perhaps two or three hundred per cent in the year. No one has any fixed occupation; he is a storekeeper to-day, a ranchman to-morrow, a miner next week. I found the waiters in the chief hotel at Denver, in Colorado, saving their autumn and winter wages to start off in the spring "prospecting" for silver "claims" in the mountains. Few men stay in one of the newer cities more than a few weeks or months; to have been there a whole year is to be an old inhabitant, an oracle if you have succeeded, a by-word if you have not, for to prosper in the West you must be able to turn your hand to anything, and seize the chance to-day which every one else will have seen to-morrow. This venturesome and shifting life strengthens the reckless and heedless habits of the people. Every one thinks so much of gaining that he thinks little of spending, and in the general dearness of commodities, food (in the agricultural districts) excepted, it seems not worth while to care about small sums. In California for many years no coin lower than a ten-cent piece (5d.) was in circulation; and even in 1881, though most articles of food were abundant, nothing was sold at a lower price than five cents. The most striking alternations of fortune, the great *coups* which fascinate men and make them play for all or nothing, are of course commoner in mining regions than elsewhere.[1] But money is everywhere so valuable for the purposes of speculative investment, whether in land, live stock, or trade, as to fetch very high interest. In Walla Walla (Washington Territory) I found in 1881 that the interest on debts secured on what were deemed good safe mortgages was at the rate of fourteen per cent per annum, of course payable monthly.

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[1] In the newer towns, which are often nothing more than groups of shanties with a large hotel, a bank, a church, and inn, some drinking saloons and gambling-houses, there are few women and no homes. Everybody, except recent immigrants, Chinese, and the very poorest native Americans, lives in the hotel.

The carelessness is public as well as private. Tree stumps are left standing in the streets of a large and flourishing town like Leadville, because the municipal authorities cannot be at the trouble of cutting or burning them. Swamps are left undrained in the suburbs of a populous city like Portland, which every autumn breed malarious fevers; and the risk of accidents to be followed by actions does not prevent the railways from pushing on their lines along loosely heaped embankments, and over curved trestle bridges which seem as if they could not stand a high wind or the passage of a heavy train.

This mixture of science and rudeness is one of a series of singular contrasts which runs through the West, not less conspicuous in the minds of the people than in their surroundings. They value good government, and have a remarkable faculty for organizing some kind of government, but they are tolerant of lawlessness which does not directly attack their own interest. Horse-stealing and insults to women are the two unpardonable offences ; all others are often suffered to go unpunished. I was in a considerable Western city, with a population of 70,000 people, some years ago, when the leading newspaper of the place, commenting on one of the train robberies that had been frequent in the State, observed that so long as the brigands had confined themselves to robbing the railway companies and the express companies of property for whose loss the companies must answer, no one had greatly cared, seeing that these companies themselves robbed the public ; but now that private citizens seemed in danger of losing their personal baggage and money, the prosperity of the city might be compromised, and something ought to be done —a sentiment delivered with all gravity, as the rest of the article showed.[1] Brigandage tends to disappear when the country becomes populous, though there are places in comparatively old States like Illinois and Missouri where the railways are still unsafe. But the same heedlessness suffers other evils to take root, evils likely to prove permanent, including some refinements of political roguery which it is strange to find amid the simple life of forests and prairies.

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[1] In California in 1881 I was shown an estate of 600,000 acres which was said to have been lately bought for $225,000 (£45,000) by a man who had made his fortune in two years' mining, having come out without a penny.

Another such contrast is presented by the tendency of this shrewd and educated people to relapse into the oldest and most childish forms of superstition. Fortune-telling, clairvoyance, attempts to pry by the help of "mediums" into the book of Fate, are so common in parts of the West that the newspapers devote a special column, headed "astrologers," to the advertisements of these wizards and pythonesses.[2] I have counted in one issue of a San Francisco newspaper as many as eighteen such advertisements, six of which were of simple fortune-tellers, like those who used to beguile the peasant girls of Devonshire. In fact, the profession of a soothsayer or astrologer is a recognized one in California now, as it was in the Greece of Homer. Possibly the prevalence of mining speculation, possibly the existence of a large mass of ignorant immigrants from Europe, may help to account for the phenomenon, which, as California is deemed an exceptionally unreligious State, illustrates the famous saying that the less faith the more superstition.

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[1] This makes plausible the story of the Texas judge who allowed murderers to escape on points of law till he found the value of real estate declining, when he saw to it that the next few offenders were hanged.

[2] Ohio in 1883 imposed a licence tax of $300 a year on "astrologers, fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, palmisters, and seers."

All the passionate eagerness, all the strenuous effort of the Westerns is directed towards the material development of the country. To open the greatest number of mines and extract the greatest quantity of ore, to scatter cattle over a thousand hills, to turn the flower-spangled prairies of the North-west into wheat-fields, to cover the sunny slopes of the South-west with vines and olives: this is the end and aim of their lives, this is their daily and nightly thought—

> "juvat Ismara Baccho
> Conserere atque olea magnum vestire Taburnum."

The passion is so absorbing, and so covers the horizon of public as well as private life that it almost ceases to be selfish—it takes from its very vastness a tinge of ideality. To have an immense production of exchangeable commodities, to force from nature the most she can be made to yield, and send it east and west by the cheapest routes to the dearest markets, making one's city a centre of trade, and raising the price of its real estate—this, which might not have seemed a glorious consummation to Isaiah or Plato, is preached by Western newspapers as a kind of religion. It is not really, or at least it is not wholly, sordid. These people are intoxicated by the majestic scale of the nature in which their lot is cast, enormous mineral deposits, boundless prairies, forests which, even squandered—wickedly squandered—as they now are, will supply timber to the United States for centuries; a soil which, with the rudest cultivation, yields the most abundant crops, a populous continent for their market. They see all round them railways being built, telegraph wires laid, steamboat lines across the Pacific projected, cities springing up in the solitudes, and settlers making the wilderness to blossom like the rose. Their imagination revels in these sights and signs of progress, and they gild their own struggles for fortune with the belief that they are the missionaries of civilization and the instruments of Providence in the greatest work the world has seen. The following extract from a newspaper published at New Tacoma in Washington Territory expresses with frank simplicity the conception of greatness and happiness which is uppermost in the Far West; and what may seem a touch of conscious humour is, if humorous it be, none the less an expression of sincere conviction.

WHY WE SHOULD BE HAPPY

"Because we are practically at the head of navigation on Puget Sound. Tacoma is the place where all the surplus products of the south and of the east, that are exported by way of the Sound, must be laden on board the vessels that are to carry them to the four corners of the world. We should be happy because being at the head of navigation on Puget Sound, and the shipping point for the south and the east, the centre from which shall radiate lines of commerce to every point on the circumference of the earth, we are also nearer by many miles than any other town on Puget Sound to that pass in the Cascade mountains through which the Cascade division of the Northern Pacific railroad will be built in the near future; not only nearer to the Stampede pass, but easily accessible from there by a railroad line of gentle grade, which is more than can be said of any town to the north of us.

"We should be happy for these reasons and because we are connected by rail with Portland on the Willamette, with St. Paul, Chicago, and New York; because being thus connected we are in daily communication with the social, political, and financial centres of the western hemisphere; because all the people of the south and of the east who visit these shores must first visit New Tacoma; because from here will be distributed to the people of the north-west all that shall be brought across the continent on the cars, and from here shall be distributed to merchants all over the United States the cargoes of ships returning here from every foreign port to load with wheat, coal, and lumber. We should be and we are happy because New Tacoma is the Pacific coast terminus of a transcontinental line of railroad. Because this is the only place on the whole Pacific coast north of San Francisco where through freight from New York can be loaded on ship directly from the cars in which it came from the Atlantic side.

"Other reasons why we should be happy are, that New Tacoma is in the centre of a country where fruits and flowers, vegetables and grain, grow in almost endless variety; that we are surrounded with everything beautiful in nature, that we have scenery suited to every mood, and that there are opportunities here for the fullest development of talents of every kind. We have youth, good health, and opportunity. What more could be asked?"

If happiness is thus procurable, the Great West ought to be happy.[1] But there is often a malignant influence at work to destroy happiness in the shape of a neighbouring city, which is making progress as swift or swifter, and threatens to eclipse its competitors. The rivalry between these Western towns is intense and extends to everything. It is sometimes dignified by an unselfish devotion to the greatness of the city which a man has seen grow with its own growth from infancy to a vigorous manhood. I have known citizens of Chicago as proud of Chicago as a Londoner, in the days of Elizabeth, was proud of London. They show you the splendid parks and handsome avenues with as much pleasure as a European noble shows his castle and his pictures: they think little of offering hundreds of thousands of dollars to beautify the city or enrich it with a library or an art gallery. In other men this laudable corporate pride is stimulated, not only by the love of competition which lies deep in the American as it does in the English breast, but also by personal interest, for the prosperity of the individual is inseparable from that of the town. As its fortunes rise or fall, so will his corner lots or the profits of his store.[1] It is not all towns that succeed. Some after reaching a certain point stand still, receiving few accessions; at other times, after a year or two of bloom, a town wilts and withers; trade declines; enterprising citizens depart, leaving only the shiftless and impecunious behind; the saloons are closed, the shanties fall to ruin, in a few years nothing but heaps of straw and broken wood, with a few brick houses awaiting the next blizzard to overthrow them, are left on the surface of the prairie. Thus New Tacoma is harassed by the pretensions of the even more eager and enterprising Seattle; thus the greater cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis have striven for the last twenty years for the title of Capital of the North-West. In 1870 St. Paul was already a substantial city, and Minneapolis just beginning to be known as the possessor of immense water advantages from its position on the Mississippi at the Falls of St. Anthony. Now, though St. Paul contains some 160,000 inhabitants, Minneapolis with 200,000 has distanced her in the race, and has become, having in the process destroyed the beauty of her Falls, the greatest flour-milling centre in America. The newspapers of each of such competing cities keep up a constant war upon the other; and everything is done by municipal bodies and individual citizens to make the world believe that their city is advancing and all its neighbours standing still. Prosperity is largely a matter of advertising, for an afflux of settlers makes prosperity, and advertising, which can take many forms, attracts settlers. Many a place has lived upon its "boom" until it found something more solid to live on; and to a stranger who asked in a small Far Western town how such a city could keep up four newspapers, it was well answered that it took four newspapers to keep up such a city.

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[1] New Tacoma has one glory which the inhabitants, it is to be feared, value less than those dwelt on in the article: it commands the finest view of a mountain on the Pacific coast, perhaps in all North America, looking across its calm inlet to the magnificent snowy mass of Mount Tacoma (14,700 feet) rising out of deep dark forests thirty miles away.

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[1] In the West each town and district is specially vain of the size to which its vegetables grow, and the number of bushels of wheat to the acre its soil produces. After hearing repeated boasts from a succession of cities along a railroad line, I asked at one whether it was not the fact that their land got up to 100 bushels an acre? This was a little too much for them—73 bushels is the highest I have ever heard claimed—and they answered. "Well not perhaps quite that, but very nearly."

Confidence goes a long way towards success. And the confidence of these Westerns is superb. I happened in 1883 to be at the city of Bismark in Dakota when this young settlement was laying the corner-stone of its Capitol, intended to contain the halls of the legislature and other State offices of Dakota when that flourishing Territory should have become a State, or perhaps, for they spoke of dividing it, two States. The town was then only some five years old, and may have had six or seven thousand inhabitants. It was gaily decorated for the occasion, and had collected many distinguished guests—General U. S. Grant, several governors of neighbouring States and Territories, railroad potentates, and others. By far the most remarkable figure was that of Sitting Bull, the famous Sioux chief, who had surprised and slain a detachment of the American army some years before. Among the speeches made, in one of which it was proved that as Bismark was the centre of Dakota, Dakota the centre of the United States, and the United States the centre of the world, Bismark was destined to "be the metropolitan hearth of the world's civilization," there came a short but pithy discourse from this grim old warrior, in which he told us, through an interpreter, that the Great Spirit moved him to shake hands with everybody. However, the feature of the ceremonial which struck us Europeans most was the spot chosen for the Capitol. It was not in the city, nor even on the skirts of the city; it was nearly a mile off, on the top of a hill in the brown and dusty prairie. "Why here?" we asked. "Is it because you mean to enclose the building in a public park?" "By no means; the Capitol is intended to be in the centre of the city; it is in this direction that the city is to grow." It is the same everywhere from the

Mississippi to the Pacific. Men seem to live in the future rather than in the present: not that they fail to work while it is called to-day, but that they see the country not merely as it is, but as it will be, twenty, fifty, a hundred years hence, when the seedlings shall have grown to forest trees.

This constant reaching forward to and grasping at the future does not so much express itself in words, for they are not a loquacious people, as in the air of ceaseless haste and stress which pervades the West.[1] They remind you of the crowd which Vathek found in the hall of Eblis, each darting hither and thither with swift steps and unquiet mien, driven to and fro by a fire in the heart. Time seems too short for what they have to do, and result always to come short of their desire. One feels as if caught and whirled along in a foaming stream, chafing against its banks, such is the passion of these men to accomplish in their own life-times what in the past it took centuries to effect. Sometimes in a moment of pause, for even the visitor finds himself infected by the all-pervading eagerness, one is inclined to ask them: "Gentlemen, why in heaven's name this haste? You have time enough. No enemy threatens you. No volcano will rise from beneath you. Ages and ages lie before you. Why sacrifice the present to the future, fancying that you will be happier when your fields teem with wealth and your cities with people? In Europe we have cities wealthier and more populous than yours, and we are not happy. You dream of your posterity; but your posterity will look back to yours as the golden age, and envy those who first burst into this silent splendid Nature, who first lifted up their axes upon these tall trees and lined these waters with busy wharves. Why, then, seek to complete in a few decades what the other nations of the world took thousands of years over in the older continents? Why do things rudely and ill which need to be done well, seeing that the welfare of your descendants may turn upon them? Why, in your hurry to subdue and utilize Nature, squander her splendid gifts? Why allow the noxious weeds of Eastern politics to take root in your new soil, when by a little effort you might keep it pure? Why hasten the advent of that threatening day when the vacant spaces of the continent shall all have been filled, and the poverty or discontent of the older States shall find no outlet? You have opportunities such as mankind has never had before, and may never have again. Your work is great and noble: it is done for a future longer and vaster than our conceptions can embrace. Why not make its outlines and beginnings worthy of these destinies the thought of which gilds your hopes and elevates your purposes?"

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[1] In the West men usually drop off the cars before they have stopped, and do not enter them again till they are already in motion, hanging on like bees to the end of the tail car as it quits the depot.

Being once suddenly called upon to "offer a few remarks" to a Western legislature, and having on the spur of the moment nothing better to offer, I tendered some such observations as these, seasoned, of course, with the compliments to the soil, climate and "location" reasonably expected from a visitor. They were received in good part, as indeed no people can be more kindly than the Western Americans; but it was surprising to hear several members who afterwards conversed with me remark that the political point of view—the fact that they were the founders of new commonwealths, and responsible to posterity for the foundations they laid, a point of view so trite and obvious to a European visitor that he pauses before expressing it—had not crossed their minds. If they spoke truly—and subsequent observation led me to think they did—there was in their words further evidence of the predominance of material efforts and interests over all others, even over those political instincts which are deemed so essential a part of the American character. The arrangements of his government lie in the dim background of the picture which fills the Western eye. The foreground is filled by ploughs and sawmills, ore-crushers and railway locomotives. These so absorb his thoughts as to leave little time for constitutions and legislation; and when constitutions and legislation are thought of, it is as means for better securing the benefits of the earth and of trade to the producer, and preventing the greedy corporation from intercepting their fruits.

Politically, and perhaps socially also, this haste and excitement, this absorption in the development of the material resources of the country, are unfortunate. As a town built in a hurry is seldom well built, so a society will be the sounder in health for not having grown too swiftly. Doubtless much of the scum will be cleared away from the surface when the liquid settles and cools down. Lawlessness and lynch law will disappear; saloons and gambling-houses will not prosper in a well-conducted population; schools will improve and universities grow out of the raw colleges which one already finds even in the newer Territories. Nevertheless the bad habits of professional politics, as one sees them on the Atlantic coast, are not unknown in these communities; and the unrestfulness, the passion for speculation, the feverish eagerness for quick and showy results, may so soak into the texture of the popular mind as to colour it for centuries to come. These are the shadows which to the eye of the traveller seem to fall across the glowing landscape of the Great West.

CHAPTER CXIV

THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

THE task of forecasting the future is one from which a writer does well to turn away, for the coasts of history are strewn with the wrecks of predictions launched by historians and philosophers. No such ambitious task shall be essayed by me. But as I have described the institutions of the American commonwealth as they stand at this moment, seldom expressing an opinion as to their vitality or the influences which are at work to modify them, I may reasonably be asked to state, before bringing this book to a close, what processes of change these institutions seem to be at this moment undergoing. Changes move faster in our age than they ever moved before, and America is a land of change. No one doubts that fifty years hence it will differ at least as much from what it is now as it differs now from the America which De Tocqueville described. The causes whose action will mould it are far too numerous, too complex, too subtly interwoven for any one to be able to guess what their joint result will be. All we can ever say of the future is that it will be unlike the present. I will therefore attempt, not to predict future changes, but only to indicate some of the processes of change now in progress which have gone far enough to let us see that they are due to causes of unmistakable potency, causes likely to continue in activity for some time to come.

I begin with a glance at the Federal system, whose equilibrium it has been the main object of the Federal Constitution to preserve. That equilibrium has been little disturbed. So far as law goes, it has suffered no change since the amendments to the Constitution which recorded and formulated the results of the Civil War. Before the war many Americans and most Europeans expected a dissolution of the Union, either by such a loosening of the Federal tie as would reduce the Union to a mere league, or by the formation of several State groups wholly independent of one another. At this moment, however, nothing seems less likely than another secession. The States' Rights spirit has declined. The material interests of every part of the country are bound up with those of every other. The capital of the Eastern cities has been invested in mines in the West, in iron-works and manufactories in the South, in mortgages and railroads everywhere. The South and the West need this capital for their development, and are daily in closer business relations with the East. The produce of the West finds its way to the Atlantic through the ports of the East. Every produce market, every share market, vibrates in response to the Produce Exchange and Stock Exchange of New York. Each part of the country has come to know the other parts far better than was possible in earlier times; and the habit of taking journeys hither and thither grows with the always-growing facilities of travel. Many families have sons or brothers in remote States; many students come from the West and the South to Eastern universities, and form ties of close friendship there. Railways and telegraphs are daily narrowing and compressing the vast area between ocean and ocean. As the civilized world was a larger world in the days of Herodotus than it is now,—for it took twice as many months to travel from the Caspian Sea to the Pillars of Hercules as it takes now to circumnavigate the globe; one was obliged to use a greater number of languages, and the journey was incomparably more dangerous,—so now the United States, with their sixty millions of people, extending from the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf of California, are a smaller country for all the purposes of government and social intercourse, than they were before the cession of Louisiana in 1803, for it took longer then to go from Boston to Charleston than it takes now to go from Portland in Maine to Portland in Oregon, and the journey was far more costly and difficult.

Even the Pacific States, which might have seemed likely to form a community by themselves, are being drawn closer to those of the Mississippi basin. Population will in time become almost continuous along the lines of the Northern and Southern Pacific Railways, and though the deserts of Nevada may remain unreclaimed, prosperous communities round the Great Salt Lake will form a link between California and the Rocky Mountain

States. With more frequent communication, local peculiarities and local habits of thought diminish; the South grows every day less distinctively Southern, and country-folk are more influenced by city ideas. There is now not a single State with any material interest that would be benefited, probably none with any sentiment that would be gratified, by separation from the body of the Union. No great question has arisen tending to bind States into groups and stimulating them to joint action. The chief problems which lie before the country wear an aspect substantially the same in its various sections, and public opinion is divided on them in those sections upon lines generally similar. In a word, the fact that the government is a Federal one does not at this moment seem to make any difference to the cohesion of the body politic; the United States are no more likely to dissolve than if they were a unified republic like France or a unified monarchy like Italy.

As secession is improbable, so also is the extinction of the several States by absorption into the central government. It was generally believed in Europe, when the North triumphed over secession in 1865, that the Federal system was virtually at an end. The legal authority of Congress and the President had been immensely developed during the struggle; a powerful army, flushed with victory, stood ready to enforce that authority; and there seemed reason to think that the South, which had fought so stubbornly, would have to be kept down during many years by military force. However, none of these apprehended results followed. The authority of the central government presently sank back within its former limits, some of the legislation based on the constitutional amendments which had extended it for certain purposes being cut down by judicial decision. The army was disbanded; self-government was soon restored in the lately insurgent States, and the upshot of the years of civil war and reconstruction has been, while extinguishing the claim of State sovereignty, to replace the formerly admitted State rights upon a legal basis as firm as they ever occupied before. At this moment State rights are not in question, nor has either party an interest in advocating the supersession of State action in any department of government. The conservatism of habit and well-settled legal doctrine which would resist any such proposal is very strong. State autonomy, as well as local government within each State, is prized by every class in the community, and bound up with the personal interest of those who feel that these comparatively limited spheres offer a scope to their ambition which a wider theatre might deny.

It is nevertheless impossible to ignore the growing strength of the centripetal and unifying forces. I have already referred to the influence of easier and cheaper communications, of commerce and finance, of the telegraph, of the filling up of the intermediate vacant spaces in the West. There is an increasing tendency to invoke congressional legislation to deal with matters, such as railroads, which cannot be adequately handled by State laws, or to remove divergencies, such as those in bankrupt laws and the law of marriage and divorce, which give rise to practical inconveniences. The advocates of such proposals as liquor-prohibition and the restriction of the hours of labour are more and more apt to carry their action into the Federal sphere, while admitting that the Federal Constitution would need amendment in order to enable Congress to effect what they desire. State patriotism, State rivalry, State vanity, are no doubt still conspicuous, yet the political interest felt in State governments is slighter than it was forty years ago, while national patriotism has become warmer and more pervasive. The *rôle* of the State is socially and morally, if not legally, smaller now than it then was, and ambitious men look on a State legislature as little more than a stepping-stone to Congress. It would be rash to assert that disjunctive forces will never again reveal themselves, setting the States against the National government, and making States' Rights once more a matter of practical controversy. But any such force is likely, so far as we can now see, to prove transitory, whereas the centripetal forces are permanent and secular forces, working from age to age. Wherever in the modern world there has been a centrifugal movement, tending to break up a State united under one government, or to loosen the cohesion of its parts, the movement has sprung from a sentiment of nationality, and has been reinforced, in almost every case, by a sense of some substantial grievance or by a belief that material advantages were to be secured by separation. The cases of Holland and Belgium, of Hungary and Germanic Austria, of the Greeks and Bulgarians in their struggle with the Turks, of Iceland in her struggle with Denmark, all illustrate this proposition. When such disjunctive forces are absent, the more normal tendency to aggregation and centralization prevails. In the United States all the elements of a national feeling are present, race,[1] language, literature, pride in past achievements, uniformity of political habits and ideas; and this national feeling which unifies the people is reinforced by an immensely strong material interest in the maintenance of a single government over the breadth of the continent. It may therefore be concluded that while there is no present likelihood of change from a federal to a consolidated republic, and while the existing legal rights and functions of the several States may remain undiminished for many years to come, the importance of the States will decline as the majesty and authority of the National government increase.

The next question to be asked relates to the component parts of the National government itself. Its equilibrium stands now as stable as at any former epoch. Yet it has twice experienced violent oscillations. In the days of Jackson, and again in those of Lincoln, the Executive seemed to outweigh Congress. In the days of Tyler, Congress threatened the Executive; while in those of Andrew Johnson it reduced the Executive to impotence. That no permanent disturbance of the balance followed the latter of these oscillations shows how well the balance had been adjusted at starting. At this moment there is nothing to show that any one department is gaining on any other. The Judiciary, if indeed the judges can be called a political department, would seem to have less discretionary power than seventy years ago, for by their own decisions they have narrowed the scope of their discretion, determining points in which, had they remained open, the personal impulses and views of the Bench might have had room to play. Congress has been the branch of government with the largest facilities for usurping the powers of the other branches, and probably with the most disposition to do so. Congress has constantly tried to encroach both on the Executive and on the States, sometimes, like a wild bull driven into a corral, dashing itself against the imprisoning walls of the Constitution. But although Congress has succeeded in occupying nearly all of the area which the Constitution left vacant and un-allotted between the several authorities it established, Congress has not become any more distinctly than in earlier days the dominant power in the State, the organ of national sovereignty, the irresistible exponent of the national will. In a country ruled by public opinion, it could hold this position only in virtue of its capacity for leading opinion, that is to say, of its courage, promptitude, and wisdom. Since it grows in no one of these qualities, it wins no greater ascendency; indeed its power, as compared with that of public opinion, seems rather to decline. Its division into two co-ordinate Houses is no doubt a source of weakness as well as of safety. Yet what is true of Congress as a whole is true of each House taken separately. The Senate, to which the eminence of many individual senators formerly gave a moral ascendency, has lost as much in the intellectual authority of its members as it has gained in their wealth. The House, with its far greater numbers and its far greater proportion of inexperienced members, suffers from the want of internal organization, and seems unable to keep pace with the increasing demands made on it for constructive legislation. One is sometimes inclined to think that Congress might lose its hold on the respect and confidence of the nation, and sink into a subordinate position, were there any other authority which could be substituted for it. There is, however, no such authority, for law-making cannot be given to a person or to a court, while the State legislatures have the same faults as Congress in a greater degree. We may accordingly surmise that Congress will retain its present place; but so far as can be gathered from present phenomena, it will retain this place in respect not of the satisfaction of the people with its services, but of their inability to provide a better servant.

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[1] The immense influx of immigrants has not greatly affected the sense of race unity, for the immigrant's child is almost always eager to become to all intents and purposes an American. Moreover the immigrants are so dispersed over the country that no single section of them is in any State nearly equal to the native population. Here and there in the West, Germans have tried to appropriate townships or villages, and keep English speaking folk at a distance, but this happens on so small a scale as to cause no disquiet.

The weakness of Congress is the strength of the President. Though it cannot be said that his office has risen in power or dignity since 1789, there are reasons for believing that it may reach a higher point than it has occupied at any time since the Civil War. The tendency everywhere in America to concentrate power and responsibility in one man is unmistakable. There is no danger that the President should become a despot, that is, should attempt to make his will prevail against the will of the majority. But he may have a great part to play as the leader of the majority and the exponent of its will. He is in some respects better fitted both to represent and to influence public opinion than Congress is. No doubt he suffers from being the nominee of a party, because this draws on every act he does the hostility of zealots of the opposite party. But the number of voters who are not party zealots increases, increases from bad causes as well as from good causes; for as a capable President sways the dispassionately patriotic, so a crafty President can find means of playing upon those who have their own ends to serve. A vigorous personality attracts the multitude, and attracts it the more the huger it grows; while a chief magistrate's influence excites little alarm when exerted in leading a majority which acts through the constitutional organs of government. There may therefore be still undeveloped possibilities of greatness in store for the Presidents of the future. But as these possibilities depend, like the possibilities of the British and German Crowns, perhaps one may add of the Papacy, on the wholly unpredictable element of personal capacity in the men who may fill the office, we need speculate on them no further.

From the organs of government I pass to the party system, its machinery and its methods. Nothing in recent history suggests that the statesmen who claim to be party leaders, or the politicians who act as party managers, are disposed either to loosen the grip with which their organization has clasped the country, or to improve the methods it employs. Changes in party measures there will of course be in the future, as there have been in the past; but the professionals are not the men to make them changes for the better. The Machine will not be reformed from within: it must be assailed from without. Two heavy blows have been lately struck at it. The first was the Civil Service Reform Act of 1883. If this Act is honestly administered, and its principle extended to other Federal offices, if States and cities follow, as a few have done, in the wake of the National government, the Spoils system may before long be rooted out, and with that system the power of the Machine will crumble. The Spoils system has stood for fifty years, and the bad habits it has formed cannot at once be unlearned. But its extinction will deprive professionals of their chief present motive for following politics. The tares which now infest the wheat will presently wither away, and the old enemy will have to sow a fresh crop of some other kind. The second blow is the frequent appearance, not merely in Federal elections, but in State and municipal elections, of a body of independent men pledged to vote for honest candidates irrespective of party. The absence for a number of years past of genuine political issues dividing the two parties, which has worked ill in taking moral and intellectual life out of the parties, and making their contests mere scrambles for office, has at last worked well in disposing intelligent citizens to sit more loose to party ties, and to consider, since it is really on men rather than on measures that they are required to vote, what the personal merits of candidates are. Thirty years ago, just at the time when the fruits of Jacksonism, that is to say, of wild democratic theory coupled with sordid and quite undemocratic practice, had begun to be felt by thoughtful persons, the urgency of the slavery question compelled the postponement of reforms in political methods, and made patriotic men fling themselves into party warfare with unquestioning zeal. When the winning of elections, no less than the winning of battles, meant the salvation of the Union, no one could stop to examine the machinery of party. For ten years after the war, the party which was usually in the majority in the North was the party which had saved the Union, and on that score commanded the devotion of its old adherents; while the opposite party was so much absorbed in struggling back to power that it did not think of mending its ways. During the last ten or fifteen years, the war issues being practically settled, public spirited citizens have addressed themselves to the task, which ought to have been undertaken in 1850, of purifying politics. Their efforts began with city government, where the evils were greatest, but have now become scarcely less assiduous in State and national politics.

Will these efforts continue, and be crowned by a growing measure of success?

To a stranger revisiting America at intervals, the progress seems to be steadily though not swiftly upward. This is also the belief of those Americans who, having most exerted themselves in the struggle against Bosses and spoilsmen, have had most misrepresentation to overcome and most disappointments to endure. The Presidents of this generation are abler men than those of forty years ago, and less apt to be the mere creatures of a knot of party managers. The poisonous influence of slavery is no longer felt. There is every day less of sentimentalism, but not less of earnestness in political discussions. There is less blind obedience to party, less disposition to palliate sins committed from party motives. The number of able men who occupy themselves with scientific economics and politics is larger, their books and articles are more widely read. The press more frequently helps in the work of reform: the pulpit deals more largely with questions of practical philanthropy and public morals. That it should be taken as a good sign when the young men of a city throw themselves into politics, shows that the new generation is believed to have either a higher sense of public duty or a less slavish attachment to party ties than that whose votes have prevailed for the last twenty years. Above all, the nation is less self-sufficient and self-satisfied than it was in days when it had less to be proud of. Fifty years ago the Americans walked in a vain conceit of their own greatness and freedom and scorned instruction from the effete monarchies of the Old World, which repaid them with contemptuous indifference. No despot ever exacted more flattery from his courtiers than they from their statesmen. Now when Europe admires their power, envies their prosperity, looks to them for instruction in not a few subjects, they have become more modest, and listen willingly to speakers and writers who descant upon their failings. They feel themselves strong enough to acknowledge their weaknesses, and are anxious that the moral life of the nation should be worthy of its expanding fortunes. As these happy omens have become more visible from year to year, there is a reasonable presumption that they represent a steady current which will continue to work for good. To judge of America rightly the observer must not fix his eye simply upon her present condition, seeking to strike a balance between the evil and the good that now appear. He must look back at what the best citizens and the most judicious strangers perceived and recorded fifty, thirty, twenty years ago, and ask whether the shadows these men saw were not darker than those of to-day, whether the forecasts of evil they were forced to form have not in many cases been belied by the event. De Tocqueville was a sympathetic as well as penetrating observer. Many of the evils he saw, and which he thought inherent and incurable, have now all but vanished. Other evils have indeed revealed themselves which he did not discern, but these may prove as transient as those with which he affrighted European readers in 1834. The men I have met in America, whose recollections went back to the fourth decade of this century, agreed in saying that there was in those days a more violent and unscrupulous party spirit, a smaller respect for law, a greater disposition to violence, less respect for the opinion of the wise, a completer submission to the prejudices of the masses, than there is to-day. Neither the Irish nor the Germans had arrived upon the scene, but New York was already given over to spoilsmen. Great corporations had scarcely arisen; yet corruption was neither uncommon nor fatal to a politician's reputation. A retrospect which shows us that some evils have declined or vanished while the regenerative forces are more numerous and more active in combating new mischiefs than they ever were before, encourages the belief that the general stream of tendency is towards improvement, and will in time bring the public life of the country nearer to the ideal which democracy is bound to set before itself.

When the Americans say, as they often do, that they trust to time, they mean that they trust to reason, to the generally sound moral tone of the multitude, to a shrewdness which after failures and through experiments learns what is the true interest of the majority, and finds that this interest coincides with the teachings of morality. They can afford to wait, because they have three great advantages over Europe, an absence of class distinctions and class hatreds, a diffusion of wealth among an immense number of small proprietors all interested in the defence of property, an exemption from chronic pauperism and economical distress, work being generally abundant, many careers open, the still unoccupied or undeveloped West providing a safety valve available in times of depression. With these advantages the Americans conceive that were their country now left entirely to itself, so that full and free scope could be secured to the ameliorative forces, political progress would be sure and steady; the best elements would come to the top, and when the dregs had settled the liquor would run clear.

In a previous chapter I have observed that this sanguine view of the situation omits two considerations. One is that the country will not be left to itself. European immigration continues, and though more than two-thirds of the immigrants make valuable citizens, the remainder, many by their political ignorance and instability, some few by their proneness to embrace anti-social doctrines, are a source of danger to the community, lowering its tone, providing material for demagogues to work on, threatening outbreaks like those of Pennsylvania in 1877, of Cincinnati in 1884, of Chicago in 1886.

The other fact to be borne in mind is of still graver import. There is a part of the Atlantic where the westward speeding steam-vessel always expects to encounter fogs. On the fourth or fifth day of the voyage, while still in bright sunlight, one sees at a distance a long low dark-gray line across the bows, and is told this is the first of the fog-banks which have to be traversed. Presently the vessel is upon the cloud, and rushes into its chilling embrace, not knowing what perils of icebergs may be shrouded within the encompassing gloom. So America, in her swift onward progress, sees, looming on the horizon and now no longer distant, a time of mists and shadows, wherein dangers may lie concealed whose form and magnitude she can scarcely yet conjecture. As she fills up her western regions with inhabitants, she sees the time approach when all the best land will have been occupied, and when the land now under cultivation will have been so far exhausted as to yield scantier crops even to more expensive culture. Although transportation may also have then become cheaper, the price of food will rise; farms will be less easily obtained and will need more capital to work them with profit; the struggle for existence will become more severe. And while the outlet which the West now provides for the overflow of the great cities will have become less available, the cities will have grown immensely more populous; pauperism, now confined to some six or seven of the greatest, will be more widely spread; wages will probably sink and work be less abundant. In fact the chronic evils and problems of old societies and crowded countries, such as we see them to-day in Europe, will have reappeared on this new soil.

High economic authorities pronounce that the beginnings of this time of pressure lie not more than thirty years ahead. Nearly all of the best arable land in the West is already occupied, so that the second and third best will soon begin to be cultivated; while the exhaustion already complained of in farms which have been under the plough for three or four decades will be increasingly felt. It will be a time of trial for democratic institutions. The future of the United States during the next half century sometimes presents itself to the mind as a struggle between two forces, the one beneficent, the other malign, the one striving to speed the nation on to a port of safety before this time of trial arrives, the other to retard its progress, so that the tempest may be upon it before the port is reached. And the question to which one reverts in musing on the phenomena of American politics is this — Will the progress now discernible towards a wiser public opinion and a higher standard of public life succeed in bringing the mass of the people up to the level of what are now the best districts in the country before the days of pressure are at hand? Or will existing evils prove so obstinate, and European immigration so continue to depress the average of intelligence and patriotism among the voters, that when the struggle for life grows far harder than it now is, the masses will yield to the temptation to abuse their power and will seek violent, and because violent, probably vain and useless remedies, for the evils which will afflict them?

If the crisis should arrive while a large part of the population still lacks the prudence and self-control which a democracy ought to possess, what result may be looked for? This is a question which no experience from similar crises in the past helps us to answer, for the phenomena will be new in the history of the world. There may be pernicious experiments tried in legislation. There may be occasional outbreaks of violence. There may even be, though nothing at present portends it, a dislocation of the present frame of government. One thing, however, need not be apprehended, the thing with which alarmists most frequently terrify us: there will not be anarchy. The forces which restore order and maintain it when restored are as strong in America as anywhere else in the world.

While admitting the possibility of such a time of strife and danger, he who has studied America will not fail to note that she will have elements of strength for meeting it which are lacking in some European countries. The struggles of labour and capital do not seem likely to take the form of a widely prevailing hatred between classes. The distribution of landed property among a great many small owners is likely to continue. The habits of freedom, together with the moderation and self-control which they foster, are likely to stand unimpaired, or to be even confirmed and mellowed by longer use. The restraining and conciliating influence of religion is stronger than in France or Germany, and more enlightened than in those continental countries where religion now seems strongest. I admit that no one can say how far the United States of fifty years hence will in these respects resemble the United States of to-day. But if we are to base our anticipations on the facts of to-day, we may look forward to the future, not indeed without anxiety, when we mark the clouds that hang on the horizon, yet with a hope that is stronger than anxiety.

CHAPTER CXV

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FUTURE

If it be hard to forecast the development of political institutions and habits, how much harder to form a conception of what the economic and social life of the United States will have become when another half century of marvellously swift material progress has more than quintupled its wealth and more than tripled its population; and when the number of persons pursuing arts and letters, and educated to enjoy the most refined pleasures of life, will have become proportionately greater than it is now. The changes of the last fifty years, great as they have been, may then prove to have been no greater than those which the next fifty will have brought. Prediction is even more difficult in this sphere than in the sphere of government, because the forces at work to modify society are more numerous, as well as far more subtle and complex, and because not only the commercial prosperity of the country, but its thought and culture are more likely than its politics to be affected by the course of events in the Old World. All I can attempt is, as in the last preceding chapter, to call attention to some of the changes which are now in progress, and to conjecture whether the phenomena we now observe are due to permanent or to transitory causes. I shall speak first of economic changes and their influence on certain current problems, next of the movements of population and possible alterations in its character, lastly, of the tendencies which seem likely to continue to affect the social and intellectual life of the nation.

The most remarkable economic feature of the years that have elapsed since the War has been the growth of great fortunes. There is a passage in the *Federalist*, written in 1788, which says, "the private fortunes of the President and Senators, as they must all be American citizens, cannot possibly be sources of danger." Even in 1833, De Tocqueville was struck by the equal distribution of wealth in the United States and the absence of capitalists. To-day, however, there are more great millionaires, as well as more men with a capital of from $250,000 to $1,000,000 (£50,000 to £200,000), in America than in any other country; and fifty years hence it will probably contain as many large fortunes as will exist in all the countries of Europe put together. Nor are these huge accumulations due to custom and the policy of the law, which in England keep property, and especially landed property, in the hands of a few by the so-called custom of primogeniture. An American testator usually distributes his wealth among his children equally. However rich he may be, he does not expect his daughters to marry rich men, but is just as willing to see them mated to persons supporting themselves by their own efforts. And he is far more inclined than Europeans are to bestow large part of his wealth upon objects of public utility, instead of using it to found a family. In spite of these dispersing forces, great fortunes grow with the growing prosperity of the country, and the opportunities it offers of amassing enormous piles by bold operations. Even an unspeculative business may, if skilfully conducted, bring in greater gains than can often be hoped for in Europe, because the scale of operations is in America so large that a comparatively small percentage of profit may mean a very large income. These causes are likely to be permanent; nor can any legislation that is compatible with the rights of property as now understood, do much to restrict them. We may therefore expect that the class of very rich men, men so rich as to find it difficult to spend their income in enjoying life, though they may go on employing it in business, will continue to increase.

It may be suggested that the great fortunes of to-day are due to the swift development of the West, so that after a time they will cease to arise in such numbers, while those we now see will have been scattered. The development of the West must, however, continue for forty or fifty years to come; and though the wealthy do not seek to keep their wealth together after their death by artificial means, many are the sons of the rich who start with capital enough to give them a great advantage for further accumulation. There are as yet comparatively few careers to compete with business; nor is it as easy as in Europe to spend a fortune on pleasure. The idle rich of America, who, though relatively few, are numerous enough to form a class in the greatest Atlantic cities, seem by no means the most contented class in the country.

The growth of vast fortunes has helped to create a political problem, for they become a mark for the invective of the more extreme sections of the Labour party. But should its propaganda so far prosper as to produce legislative attacks upon accumulated wealth, such attacks will be directed (at least in the first instance), not against individual rich men, but against incorporated companies, since it is through corporations that wealth has made itself obnoxious. Why the power of these bodies should have grown so much greater in the United States than in Europe, and why they should be more often controlled by a small knot of men, are questions too intricate to be here discussed. Companies are in many ways so useful that any general diminution of the legal facilities for forming them seems improbable; but I conceive that they will be even more generally than hitherto subjected to special taxation; and that their power of taking and using public franchises will be further restricted. He who considers the irresponsible nature of the power which three or four men, or perhaps one man, can exercise through a great corporation, such as a railroad or telegraph company, the injury they can inflict on the public as well as on their competitors, the cynical audacity with which they have often used their wealth to seduce officials and legislators from the path of virtue, will find nothing unreasonable in the desire of the American masses to regulate the management of corporations and narrow the range of their action. The same remark applies, with even more force, to combinations of men not incorporated but acting together, the so-called Trusts, *i.e.* commercial rings, or syndicates. The next few years or even decades may be largely occupied with the effort to deal with these phenomena of a commercial system far more highly developed than the world has yet seen elsewhere. The economic advantages of the amalgamation of railroads and the tendency in all departments of trade for large concerns to absorb or supplant small ones, are both so marked that problems of this order seem likely to grow even larger and more urgent than they now are. Their solution will demand, not only great legal skill, but great economic wisdom.

Of the tendency to aggregation there are happily no signs so far as relates to agriculture. The only great landed estates are in the Far West, particularly in California, together with some properties held by land companies or individual speculators in the Upper Mississippi States, properties which are being generally sold in small farms to incoming settlers. In the South, large plantations are more rare than before the war, and much of the cotton crop is raised by peasant farmers. It is of course possible that cultivation on a large scale may in some regions turn out to be more profitable than that of small freeholders: agriculture as an art may be still in its infancy, and science may alter the conditions of production in this highly inventive country. But at present nothing seems to threaten that system of small proprietors tilling the soil they live on which so greatly contributes to the happiness and stability of the commonwealth. The motives which in Europe induce rich men to buy large estates are here wholly wanting, for no one gains either political power or social status by becoming a landlord.

Changes in economic conditions have begun to bring about changes in population which will work powerfully on the future of society and politics. One such change has been passing on New England during the last twenty years. Its comparatively thin and ungenial soil, which has generally hard rock at no great depth below the surface, and has been cultivated in many places for nigh two hundred years, is now unable to sustain the competition of the rich and virgin lands of the West. The old race of New England yeomen have accordingly begun to sell or abandon their farms and to migrate to the upper valley of the Mississippi, where they make the prosperity of the North-western States. The lands which they have left vacant are frequently occupied by immigrants, sometimes French Canadians, but chiefly Irish, for the Germans come but little to New England; and thus that which was the most purely English part of America is now becoming one of the most Celtic, since the cities also are full of Irish and Canadians. It is impossible not to regret the disappearance of a picturesquely primitive society which novelists and essayists have made familiar to us, with its delightful mixture of homely simplicity and keen intelligence. Of all the types of rustic life which imagination has since the days of Theocritus embellished for the envy or refreshment of the dwellers in cities, this latest type has been to modern Europe the most real and not the least attractive. It will soon have passed away; nor will the life of the robust sons of the Puritans in the North-western prairies, vast and bare and new, reproduce the idyllic quality of their old surroundings. But the Irish squatters on the forsaken farms rear their children under better conditions than those either of the American cities or of the island of their birth, and they are replenishing New England with a vigorous stock.

Another change may possibly be seen when in the course of a few decades immigration begins to turn towards a Southern region, the far greater part of which has remained until now undeveloped. Western North Carolina, Northern Georgia, and Eastern Tennessee possess enormous mineral deposits, only a few of which have yet begun to be worked. There are splendid forests; there is in many places a soil believed to be fertile, little of which has been brought under cultivation; while the climate is in general not too hot for white labour. It seems probable that when the vacant spaces of the North-west are no longer wide enough to receive the continued influx of settlers, these regions will become the seat of industries attracting and employing a vast population: and this population may in large measure come from the more crowded parts of the Northern States, carrying with it Northern habits and ideas which will quicken the progress of a backward part of the South, and bring her into a more perfect harmony with the rest of the country.

The mention of the South raises a group of questions bearing on the future of the negro and the relations he will sustain to the whites. To set forth even the main data needed for discussing these questions would need several chapters; so I must content myself with remarking that the best authorities now hold that the increase in the black population, even in the Gulf States, is less rapid than the census returns of 1880 had been thought to show,[1] and does not constitute a present source of danger. The negroes have not so far, like those in some of the West India islands, relapsed into sloth and barbarism. Neither climate nor soil make it so easy as in those islands to raise by a few weeks' labour food enough to support a family through the year; while the proximity of trading and manufacturing towns draws a number of the negroes into closer relations with the whites, and gives an impulse towards progress to the whole mass.

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[1] The enumeration of the negroes in 1870 was defective in many parts of the South, and the increase shown by the figures of 1880 was therefore greater than the reality.

Although the line of separation between whites and blacks is more sharply drawn than before the Civil War, and is in some matters drawn by law as well as by custom; and although there is no mixture of blood by inter-marriage, there seems to be but slight ill feeling between the races, slight disposition on the part of the whites to oppress, or on that of the negroes to combine against their former masters. The gift of the suffrage, though rendered of little direct effect by the wiles of the whites, who in one way or another continue to suppress the negro vote in all important elections, has had the effect of raising to some extent both the white's view of the negro and the negro's view of himself. The South has changed, is changing, and must continue to change, in so many regards that it would be rash to conjecture the attitude of the coloured population forty years hence, when a generation accustomed to freedom and more generally instructed—for at present more than half the coloured population of school age are not in school, and only about one-tenth of the adults can read a newspaper with ease — has come to maturity. All that can be said is that at present thoughtful observers in the South seem to feel little anxiety, and expect that for many years to come the negroes, naturally a good-natured and easy-going race, will be content with the position of an inferior caste, doing the hard work, and especially the field work, of the country, but becoming gradually permeated by American habits and ideas, and sending up into the higher walks of life a slowly increasing number of their ablest members. It might be thought that this elevating process would be accelerated by the sympathy of the coloured people at the North, who enjoy greater educational opportunities. But statistics show that the negro race increases comparatively slowly to the north of latitude 40°, and it does not even there blend with the whites. A very high authority estimates the probable coloured population in 1900 at ten millions out of a total population of eighty millions, and adds the remark that, "considering the limited area of land in which negroes have an advantage over whites by physiological adaptation to climate, and the industrial advantage of the whites where climatic conditions are equal, it is doubtful whether there is room in the South for so large a population."[1]

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[1] General Francis A. Walker in *Ency. Brit.*, article "United States." He observes that in 1790 the coloured people were 19·3 per cent of the population of the United States, whereas in 1880 they were only 13·1.

Two other questions relating to changes in population must be adverted to before we leave this part of the subject. There are Europeans who hold—and in this physiologically-minded age it is natural that men should hold—that the evolution of a distinctively American type of character and manners must be still distant, because the heterogeneous elements of the population (in which the proportion of English blood is smaller now than it was fifty years ago) must take a long time to become mixed and assimilated. This is a plausible view; yet I doubt whether differences of blood have the importance which it assumes. What strikes the traveller, and what the Americans themselves delight to point out to him, is the amazing solvent power which American institutions, habits, and ideas exercise upon new-comers of all races. The children of Irishmen, Germans, and Scandinavians are far more like native Americans than prevalent views of heredity would have led us to expect; nor is it without interest to observe that Nature has here repeated on the Western continent that process of mixing Celtic with Germanic and Norse blood which she began in Britain more than a thousand years ago.[1]

This parallel may seem fanciful, yet those who lay stress on race characteristics and expect the American people of the future to be sensibly changed by immigration, may be asked to remember that in that immigration neither the Celtic nor the Teutonic element has so far been able to preponderate. I venture, however, to believe that the intellectual and moral atmosphere into which the settlers from Europe come has more power to assimilate them than their race qualities have power to change it; and that the future of America will be less affected by this influx of new blood than any one who has not studied the American democracy of to-day can realize. The influence of European immigration is so far to be sought, not so much in any tinging of the national character, as in the unfortunate results it has had upon the public life of cities, and the unexpectedly severe strain it has put on universal suffrage. Nor must another source of evil pass unnoticed. The most conspicuous evidence of American prosperity has been hitherto seen in the high standard of living to which the native working classes of the North have risen, in the abundance of their food and the quality of their clothing, in the neatness and comfort of their homes, in the decent orderliness of their lives, and the fondness for reading of their women. The settlers of the last half century, though at first far behind the native Americans in all these respects, have tended to rise to their level and, except in a few of the larger cities, have after fifteen or twenty years practically adopted American standards of comfort. But within the last decade new swarms of European immigrants have invaded America, drawn from their homes in the eastern parts of Central Europe by the constant cheapening of ocean transit and by that more thorough drainage, so to speak, of the inland regions of Europe which is due to the extension of railways. These immigrants, largely of Slavonic race, come from a lower stratum of civilization than the German immigrants of the past, and, since they speak foreign tongues, are less quickly amenable to American influences, and probably altogether less improvable, than are the Irish. There seems to be a danger that if they continue to come in large numbers they may retain their own low standard of decency and comfort, and menace the continuance among the working class generally of that far higher standard which has hitherto prevailed in all but a few spots in the country. Already the United States, which twenty years ago rejoiced in the increase of immigration, begins to regard it with disquiet; and laws are passed to prevent the entrance not only of labourers brought under contract but of criminals and of persons who seem likely to become a burden upon the community.[1]

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[1] The ratio borne by the Celtic elements in the population of Britain (*i.e.* the Picts and Gaels of northern Britain and the Cymry of middle and western Britain who survived the onslaught of the Angles and Saxons in the fifth and sixth centuries) to the Teutonic elements in that population as it has stood during the last three centuries, may probably be a ratio not very different from that which the Irish immigrants to America bear to the German immigrants: so that the relative proportions of Celtic and Teutonic blood, as these proportions existed in the Americans of fifty years ago, have not been greatly altered by the Irish and the German immigration of the last five decades. The analogy may be carried one step farther by observing that the Scandinavians who now settle in the north-western States, as they have come later than Celts or Germans, so also have come in a proportion to Celts and Germans corresponding to that borne to the previous inhabitants of Britain by the Danes and Norwegians who poured their vigorous blood into the veins of the English race from the ninth century onwards.

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[1] Such laws are of course difficult of enforcement, because when the immigrants arrive it is seldom possible to say which ought to be refused ingress as paupers or criminals; and it has accordingly been proposed to throw upon United States Consuls at European ports of departure the duty of sifting those who seek to embark for America, and granting certificates to those who are approved. I am told that at present only about 500 are annually sent back to Europe out of an average of more than 500,000 who annually arrive.

The intrusion of these inauspicious elements is not the only change in the population which may cause anxiety. For many years past there has been an indraught of people from the rural districts to the cities. More than one-fourth of the whole sixty millions are now, it is estimated, to be found in cities with a population exceeding 8000, and the transfer of people from a rural to an urban life goes on all the faster because it is due not merely to economic causes, such as operate all the world over, and to the spirit of enterprise which is strong in the American youth, but also to the distaste which the average native American, a more sociable and amusement-loving being than the English or German peasant, feels for the isolation of farm life and the monotony of farm labour. Even in 1844 R. W. Emerson wrote: "The cities drain the country of the best part of its population, the flower of the youth of both sexes goes into the towns, and the country is cultivated by a much inferior class." Since then the Western forests have been felled and the Western prairies brought under the plough by the stalwart sons of New England and New York. But now again, and in the West hardly less than in the East, the complaint goes up that native American men and women long for a city life, and gladly leave tillage to the new-comers from Germany and Scandinavia. Whether a city-bred population will have the physical vigour which the native rural population has shown—a population which in some of the Western States strikes one as perhaps more vigorous than any Europe can point out—is at least doubtful, for though American cities have sanitary advantages greater than those of most towns in Europe, the stress and strain of their city life is more exhausting And it need scarcely be added that in the oldest and most highly civilized districts of the country, and among the more refined sections of the people, the natural increase of population is much smaller than it is among the poorer and the ruder. In highly developed communities, the principle of natural selection is apt to be reversed: marriages are later and families smaller among the best nurtured and most cultivated class than they are among the uneducated and improvident; more children are born to the physically weak and morally untrained than to those among the rich whose natural gifts would in ages of force have enabled them to prevail in the struggle for existence. In New England and the Eastern States generally, though there are many families, historic by the number of eminent names they have produced, which still flourish and count their cousinhood by hundreds, it is nevertheless true that the original English race grows less swiftly than the Irish or the German, and far less swiftly than it did some sixty years ago.[1] Yet here also that assimilative power of which I have spoken comes to the help of the nation. Those who rise from the less cultivated class, who do not belong to what Dr. Holmes calls the Brahmin caste, still surviving in New England and once strong in Virginia, are breathed upon by the spirit of the country; they quickly absorb its culture and carry on its traditions; and they do so all the more readily because the pervading sense of equality makes a man's entrance into a class higher than that wherein he was born depend solely on his personal qualities.

European readers may ask whether the swift growth not only of wealth but of great fortunes in the United States will not end in creating an aristocracy of rich families, and therewith a new structure of society. I see no ground for expecting this, not merely because the wealthiest class passes down by imperceptible gradations of fortune to a working class far better off than the working classes of Europe, but also because the faith in equality and the love of equality are too deeply implanted in every American breast to be rooted out by any economic changes. They are the strongest beliefs and passions of the people. They make no small part of the people's daily happiness; and I can more easily imagine the United States turned into a monarchy on the one hand or a group of petty republics on the other than the aristocratic ideas and habits of Germany or even of England established on American soil. Social exclusiveness there may be,—signs of it are already discernible,—but visible and overt recognitions of rank differences, whether in the use of hereditary titles, or in the possession by one class of special privileges, or in the habit of deference by one class to another, would imply a revolution in national ideas, and a change in what may be called the chemical composition of the national mind, which is of all things the least likely to arrive.

I have left to the last the most difficult problem which a meditation on the future of American society raises. From those first days of the Republic in which its people realized that they were Americans and no longer merely English colonists, it has been a question of the keenest interest for them, as it is now for the world, when and how and in what form they would develop a distinctively new and truly national type of character and genius. In 1844 Emerson said, addressing those who had lately seen the coincidence of two fateful phenomena—the extension of railways into the West and the establishment of lines of swift ocean steamers to Europe—

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[1] General F. A. Walker gives the rate of increase of the native whites in the United States at 31·25 per cent in the decade 1870-80, but that of native whites born of native parents at 28 per cent. The average size of the native white family decreased in the same decade from 5·09 to 5·04.

> "We in the Atlantic States by position have been commercial and have imbibed easily a European culture. Luckily for us, now that steam has narrowed the Atlantic to a strait, the nervous rocky West is intruding a new and continental element into the national mind, and we shall yet have an American genius. We cannot look on the freedom of this country in connection with its youth without a presentiment that here shall laws and institutions exist on some scale of proportion to the majesty of nature. To men legislating for the area between the two oceans, betwixt the snows and the tropics, somewhat of the gravity of nature will infuse itself into the code."

Nearly half a century has passed since these words were spoken, but many events have intervened to delay that full expression of the national gifts in letters and arts, as well as in institutions, by which a modern people must reveal the peculiar nature of its genius. Emerson would doubtless have admitted in 1874 that the West had contributed less of a "new and continental element" than he expected, and that the majesty of nature had not yet filled Congress with its inspiration. Probably another generation must arise, less preoccupied with the task of material development than the two last have been, before this expression can be looked for. Europe, which used to assume in its contemptuous way that neither arts nor letters could be expected from commercial America—as Charles Lamb said that the whole Atlantic coast figured itself to him as one long counter spread with wares—Europe has now fallen into the opposite error of expecting the development of arts and letters to keep pace with and be immediately worthy of the material greatness of the country. And the Americans themselves have perhaps, if a stranger may be pardoned the remark, erred in supposing that they made, either in the days of the first settlements or in those when they won their independence, an entirely new departure, and that their new environment and their democratic institutions rendered them more completely a new people than the children of England, continuing to speak the English tongue and be influenced by European literature, could in truth have been expected to become. As Protestants have been too apt to forget the traditions of the mediæval Church, and to renounce the glories of St. Anselm and St. Bernard and Dante, so the Americans of forty years ago—for this is a mistake which they are beginning to outgrow—sought to think of themselves as superior in all regards to the aristocratic society from which they had severed themselves, and looked for an elevation in their character and an originality in their literature which neither the amplitude of their freedom nor the new conditions of their life could at once produce in the members of an ancient people.

What will be either the form or the spirit of transatlantic literature and thought when they have fully ripened is a question on which I do not attempt to speculate, for the forces that shape literature and thought are the subtlest the historian has to deal with. I return to the humbler task of pointing to causes whose already apparent power is producing a society such as has never yet been seen in Europe. Nowhere in the world is there growing up such a vast multitude of intelligent, cultivated, and curious readers. It is true that of the whole population a majority of the men read little but newspapers, and many of the women little but novels. Yet there remains a number to be counted by millions who enjoy and are moved by the higher products of thought and imagination; and it must be that as this number continues to grow, each generation rising somewhat above the level of its predecessors, history and science, and even poetry, will exert a power such as they have never yet exerted over the masses of any country. And the masses of America seem likely to constitute one-half of civilized mankind. There are those now living who may see before they die two hundred and fifty millions of men dwelling between the Atlantic and the Pacific, obeying the same government, speaking the same tongue, reading the same books. A civilized society like this is so much vaster than any which history knows of, that we can scarcely figure to ourselves what its character will be, nor how the sense of its immensity will tell upon those who address it. The range of a writer's power will be such as no writers have ever yet possessed, and the responsibility which goes hand in hand with the privilege of moving so great a multitude will devolve no less upon the thinkers and poets of England than upon those of America.

The same progress which may be expected in the enjoyment of literature and in its influence may be no less expected in the other elements of what we call civilization. Manners are becoming in America more generally polished, life more orderly, equality between the sexes more complete, the refined pleasures more easily accessible than they have ever yet been among the masses of any people. And this civilization attains a unity and harmony which makes each part of the nation understand the other parts more perfectly, and enables an intellectual impulse to be propagated in swifter waves of light than has been the case among the far smaller and more ancient states of Europe.

While this unity and harmony strengthen the cohesion of the Republic, while this diffused cultivation may be expected to overcome the economic dangers that threaten it, they are not wholly favourable to intellectual creation, or to the variety and interest of life. I will try to explain my meaning by describing the impression which stamps itself on the mind of the stranger who travels westward by railway from New York to Oregon. In Ohio he sees communities which eighty years ago were clusters of log-huts among forests, and which are now cities better supplied with all the appliances of refined and even luxurious life than were Philadelphia and New York in those days. In Illinois he sees communities which were in 1848 what Ohio was in 1808. In the new States of Dakota and Washington he sees settlements just emerging from a rudeness like that of primitive Ohio or Illinois, and reflects that such as Ohio is now, such as Illinois is fast becoming, such in some twenty years more will Dakota and Washington have become, the process of development moving, by the help of science, with an always accelerated speed. "If I return this way thirty years hence," he thinks, "I shall see, except in some few tracts which nature has condemned to sterility, nothing but civilization, a highly developed form of civilization, stretching from the one ocean to the other; the busy, eager, well-ordered life of the Hudson will be the life of those who dwell on the banks of the Yellowstone, or who look up to the snows of Mount Shasta from the valleys of California." The Far West has hitherto been to Americans of the Atlantic States the land of freedom and adventure and mystery, the land whose forests and prairies, with trappers pursuing the wild creatures, and

Indians threading in their canoes the maze of lakes, have touched their imagination and supplied a background of romance to the prosaic conditions which surround their own lives. All this will have vanished; and as the world has by slow steps lost all its mystery since the voyage of Columbus, so America will from end to end be to the Americans even as England is to the English. What new background of romance will be discovered? Where will the American imagination of the future seek its materials when it desires to escape from dramas of domestic life? Where will bold spirits find a field in which to relieve their energies when the Western world of adventure is no more? As in our globe so in the North American continent, there will be something to regret when all is known and the waters of civilization have covered the tops of the highest mountains.

He who turns away from a survey of the government and society of the United States and tries to estimate the place they hold in the history of the world's progress cannot repress a slight sense of disappointment when he compares what he has observed and studied with that which idealists have hoped for, and which Americans have desired to create. "I have seen," he says, "the latest experiment which mankind have tried, and the last which they can ever hope to try under equally favouring conditions. A race of unequalled energy and unsurpassed variety of gifts, a race apt for conquest and for the arts of peace, which has covered the world with the triumphs of its sword, and planted its laws in a hundred islands of the sea, sent the choicest of its children to a new land, rich with the bounties of nature, bidding them increase and multiply, with no enemies to fear from Europe, and few of those evils to eradicate which Europe inherits from its feudal past. They have multiplied till the sapling of two centuries ago overtops the parent trunk; they have drawn from their continent a wealth which no one dreamed of, they have kept themselves aloof from Old World strife, and have no foe in the world to fear; they have destroyed, after a tremendous struggle, the one root of evil which the mother country in an unhappy hour planted among them. And yet the government and institutions, as well as the industrial civilization of America, are far removed from that ideal commonwealth which European philosophers imagined, and Americans expected to create." The feeling expressed in these words, so often heard from European travellers, is natural to a European, who is struck by the absence from America of many of those springs of trouble to which he has been wont to ascribe the ills of Europe. But it is only the utterance of the ever-fresh surprise of mankind at the discovery of their own weaknesses and shortcomings. Why should either philosophers in Europe, or practical men in America have expected human nature to change when it crossed the ocean? when history could have told them of many ideals not less high and hopes not less confident than those that were formed for America which have been swallowed up in night. The vision of a golden age has often shimmered far off before the mind of men when they have passed through some great crisis, or climbed to some specular mount of faith, as before the traveller when he has reached the highest pastures of the Jura, the line of Alpine snows stands up and glitters with celestial light. Such a vision seen by heathen antiquity still charms us in that famous poem of Virgil's which was long believed to embody an inspired prophecy: such another rejoiced the souls of pious men in the days of Constantine, when the Christian Church, triumphant over her enemies, seemed about to realize the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Such a one reappeared to the religious reformers of the sixteenth century, who conceived that when they had purged Christianity of its corrupt accretions, the world would be again filled with the glory of God, and men order their lives according to His law. And such a vision transported men just a century ago, when it was not unnaturally believed that in breaking the fetters by which religious and secular tyranny had bound the souls and bodies of men, and in proclaiming the principle that government sprang from the consent of all, and must be directed to their good, enough had been done to enable the natural virtues of mankind to secure the peace and happiness of nations. Since 1789 many things have happened, and men have become less inclined to set their hopes upon political reforms. Those who still expect a general amelioration of the world from sudden changes look to an industrial and not a political revolution, or seek in their impatience to destroy all that now exists, fancying that from chaos something better may emerge. In Europe, whose thinkers have seldom been in a less cheerful mood than they are to-day, there are many who seem to have lost the old faith in progress; many who feel when they recall the experiences of the long pilgrimage of mankind, that the mountains which stand so beautiful in the blue of distance, touched here by flashes of sunlight and there by shadows of the clouds, will when one comes to traverse them be no Delectable Mountains, but scarred by storms and seamed by torrents, with wastes of stone above, and marshes stagnating in the valleys. Yet there are others whose review of that pilgrimage convinces them that though the ascent of man may be slow it is also sure; that if we compare each age with those which preceded it we find that the ground which seems for a time to have been lost is ultimately recovered, we see human nature growing gradually more refined, institutions better fitted to secure justice, the opportunities and capacities for happiness larger and more varied, so that the error of those who formed ideals never yet attained lay only in their forgetting how much time and effort and patience under repeated disappointment must go to that attainment.

This less sombre type of thought is more common in the United States than in Europe, for the people not only feel in their veins the pulse of youthful strength, but remember the magnitude of the evils they have vanquished, and see that they have already achieved many things which the Old World has longed for in vain. And by so much as the people of the United States are more hopeful, by that much are they more healthy. They do not, like their forefathers, expect to attain their ideals either easily or soon; but they say that they will continue to strive towards them, and they say it with a note of confidence in the voice which rings in the ear of the European visitor, and fills him with something of their own sanguine spirit. America has still a long vista of years stretching before her in which she will enjoy conditions far more auspicious than any European country can count upon. And that America marks the highest level, not only of material well-being, but of intelligence and happiness, which the race has yet attained, will be the judgment of those who look not at the favoured few for whose benefit the world seems hitherto to have framed its institutions, but at the whole body of the people.

APPENDIX

NOTE TO CHAPTER LXI

EXPLANATION (BY MR. G. BRADFORD) OF THE NOMINATING MACHINERY AND ITS PROCEDURE IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS[1]

1. *Ward and City Committees.*—The city is divided into wards by act of the city council prescribed by the legislature (number of wards in the city of Boston, twenty-five). Each ward in its primary meetings appoints a ward committee of five for the party: that is, the Republican primary appoints a Republican, and the Democratic primary a Democratic committee with varying number of members. This committee attends to the details of elections, such as printing and distributing notices and posters, and also ballots, canvassing voters, collecting and disbursing money, etc. The ward primaries nominate candidates for the common council of the city (consisting of seventy-two members), who are elected in and must be residents of the ward. The several ward committees constitute the city committee, which is thus a large body (practically a convention), and represents all the wards. The city committee chooses from its members a president, secretary, and treasurer, and each ward committee chooses one of its members as a member of a general executive committee, one for a general finance committee, and one for a general printing committee. The city committee formerly, acting as a convention, nominated the party candidates for the elective offices, which are now the mayor, the aldermen (twelve chosen at large over the city), the members of the school committee, and the street commissioners. The Democratic city committee does this still; but much dissatisfaction was caused among the Republicans by the fact that wards which had but very few Republican voters had an equal share of power in the city committee, and therefore in making nominations. (It will be seen that in organizing the national convention a similar difficulty has been encountered.) The Republican city committee has therefore ceased to make nominations, but calls upon the wards to send delegates, in proportion to their Republican vote, to a general convention for the nomination of candidates. The party lines are, however, very loosely drawn, especially in cities outside of Boston, and anybody may nominate candidates with chance of success proportional to his efforts.

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[1] Copyright by Gamaliel Bradford, 1888.

In the towns as apart from the cities, the people, in primary of each party, elect a town committee which corresponds to the ward committees of the city. The town and city committees call the primaries which elect their successors; and thus the system is kept alive. The city committee may by vote modify the structure, mode of election and functions, both of itself and of the ward committees, but in the town this power lies with the caucus or primary. The above account applies to the city of Boston, but the principles are substantially the same throughout the cities of Massachusetts, the main difference being in thoroughness of organization.

2. *County.*—The county is much less important in New England than in any other part of the country. There are to be chosen, however, county commissioners (three in number, one retiring each year, having charge of roads, jails, houses of correction, registry of deeds, and, in part, of the courts), county treasurer, registrar of deeds, registrar of probate, district attorney, and sheriff. These candidates are nominated by party conventions of the county, called by a committee elected by the last county convention. The delegates are selected by ward and town primaries at the same time with other delegates.

3. *State.*—First as to representatives to State legislature, 240 in number. The State is districted as nearly as may be in proportion to population. If a ward of a city, or a single town, is entitled to a representative, the party candidate is nominated in the primary, and must be by the Constitution (of the State) a resident in the district. If two or more towns, or two or more wards send a representative in common, the candidate is nominated in cities by a joint caucus of the wards interested called by the ward and city committee, and in the towns by a convention called by a committee elected by the previous convention. The tendency in such cases is that each of these towns or wards shall have the privilege of making nomination in turn of one of its residents.

As regards senators the State is divided into forty districts. The district convention to nominate candidates is called by a committee elected by the preceding convention, and consists of delegates elected by ward and town primaries at the same time with those for State, county, and councillor conventions. Each senatorial district convention elects one member of the State central committee.

The convention for nominating members of the governor's council (eight in number) also appoints a committee to call the next convention.

The State convention consists of delegates from ward and town primaries in proportion to their party votes at last elections, and is summoned by the State central committee, consisting of forty members, elected in October by senatorial convention, and taking office on 1st January. The State committee organizes by choice of chairman, secretary, treasurer, and executive committee, who oversee the whole State campaign. The State convention nominates the party candidates for governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, attorney-general.

4. *National.*—First, representatives to Congress. Massachusetts is entitled to twelve, and is divided into twelve districts. The convention in

each district to nominate party candidates is called every two years by a committee elected by the last convention. The delegates from wards and primaries are elected at the same time with the other delegates. As United States senators are chosen by the State legislatures, no nominating convention is needed. Next are to be chosen, every four years, delegates to the National convention,—that is, under present party customs, two for each senator and representative of the State in Congress. For Massachusetts, therefore, at the present time, twenty-eight. The delegates corresponding to the representative districts are nominated by a convention in each district, called in the spring by the same committee which calls the congressional representative nominating convention in the autumn. The delegates corresponding to senators are chosen at a general convention in the spring, called by the State central committee from wards and primaries, as always; and the twenty-eight delegates at the meeting of the National convention choose the State members of the National committee.

The National convention for nominating party candidates for President is called by a National committee, elected one member by the delegates of each State at the last National convention. The National convention (and this is true in general of all conventions) may make rules for its own procedure and election—as, for example, that all State delegates shall be chosen at large instead of by districts. At the last National convention it was complained that the delegates from the Southern States, which had scarcely any Republican vote, had just as much power in making the nomination as any Northern State. The National convention therefore instructed the National committee to report a plan for adjusting this difficulty, which the latter are now at work upon. The National committee manage the party campaign, sending money and speakers to the weaker States, issue documents, collect subscriptions, and dispense general advice.

NOTE TO CHAPTER LXX

A NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTION OF 1884[1]

"As early as 10 o'clock on the fourth day of the convention most of the seats were filled, and by 11, every inch of standing room, so far as any was allowed to be occupied, was taken. The windows were also filled, and men fastened themselves on the timbers that are so numerous and so unornamental along the sides of the structure. It was a tumultuous crowd, but a very good-natured one, and the noise of conversation when the Chairman struck his gavel for order was like the low roar of the sea.

"Now a man of God, with a bald head, calls the Deity down into the melée and bids him make the candidate the right one and induce the people to elect him in November; and the idea is so in harmony with the thoughts of many who believe that only by supernatural means can James G. Blaine be elected, that the low tone of the prayer, which was not much above the character of a ward speech, provokes general laughter from those who pay any attention to it. As soon as the farce is over a lull falls over the entire assembly and a serious mood becomes universal. Tally sheets are ready, pencils are out, the delegates who are still toiling with the weak and weakening the stubborn, hurry to their places, while the gavel keeps up its heavy staccato.

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[1] From the *Chicago Herald*.

"The balloting begins. The strain of anxiety is sternest between the Blaine cohorts and the still valiant but no longer formidable following of Arthur. Every time a good vote is recorded for either there are cheers, whistlings, waving of handkerchiefs, calls of all sorts most unearthly in their hideousness, and it is apparent that the entire ten thousand are quite as well posted about the likelihood of the vote from each state and territory as are the managers themselves. Every novelty is instantly appreciated, and is followed by a lively recognition.

"When the vote of Arkansas is announced and it is found divided with Blaine the sibilant murmur flies, 'Clayton!' California's solid vote is vociferously given to the White Plume;[1] a hearty cheer ascends, and is instantly sent back with equal heartiness by the multitude outside, to whom the proceedings are being faithfully recited by the pickets straddled on the lofty window-sills. Colorado is cheered, too; and the one vote from Florida, with the one vote from Alabama previously recorded, shows that the backbone of the solid South is weakening at the very outset. A lusty Arthur cheer greets the unbroken twenty-four of Georgia. . . . Whenever a Southern State is found divided it is greedily seized as a Blaine omen, and the solitary vote for the White Plume acknowledged by Massachusetts is accepted as a most precious sign of the indulgence of Providence. For such favour was not expected from among the pharisees.

"A pin might have been heard drop while New York is being counted, and Blaine's capture of so considerable a portion of its ballot is the occasion of gleeful folly. The same anxiety waits the confession of Ohio and Pennsylvania. All parties are highly elated when the ballot of these two great constituencies is announced. A number of the States are unable to believe that their respective chairmen are men of truth; for they demand the roll-call, and the process is not only tedious but it generally shows that the chairman was perfectly correct. A great deal of laughter is created by the delegation of the District of Columbia. It is composed of two persons, Frank Conger and a coloured associate. Frank announces that the District of Columbia casts two votes for Arthur. The coloured man mounts his chair, challenges the accuracy of the count, and demands that the delegation be polled. Amid unbounded laughter his name is solemnly called, he records one vote, in stentorian tones, for 'James G. Blaine!' and this comedy is repeated on every subsequent ballot. In the final one we will find the coloured man mounting upon the chair and delivering the vote of the District of Columbia, to wit, two votes, 'solid for Blaine.' Then up jumps Frank Conger, challenges the count, demands the poll, and gets it with round after round of cheers, and volley after volley of laughter.

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[1] Mr. Blaine, who is commonly known as the Plumed Knight, having been once so called in an ecstatic peroration. So Mr. Logan was called the Black Eagle.

"At last the whisper of reckoning the totals absorbs the convention and the multitude. With a mighty shriek of triumph the Blaine cohorts are on the chairs, yelling and shouting; flags are waving, thousands of infernal little whistles are making the air hideous, idiots are waving open umbrellas, and at the top of the din the band snorts out something which is quickly drowned. The Arthur men are not cast down. They have hope left—and nothing more. Blaine has 334½ and the President only 278[1]—but that gap may be closed.

"A second ballot is ordered, and is begun while the auditorium is full of disorder, which is destined not to subside, but to grow worse and worse until pandemonium is loose. Every change of importance is in Blaine's favour, and the yelling and whistling and all the noises known to lunacy and wicked joy become chronic. Blaine has ascended to 349 and the President loiters in the distance with only 276. The outbreak that followed the first ballot is repeated and intensified. Men become monkeys and maniacs with hope and fear, and the rushing to and fro, the whispering with mouths at delegates' ears, the clatter and shouting and shrieking are intolerable. No other candidate has become so dangerous. The contest is still between the President and Blaine of Maine. A third ballot is ordered. With difficulty and only moderate success the Chair obtains order and the call of States is proceeded with, while the excitement grows more and more keen.

"It is felt that on this ballot Arthur must recede to make room for the favourite of the combination, if combination has indeed been made. There are excited and hurried consultations among Blaine's young brigadiers—and a fine lot of active fellows he has on the floor—while there is collusion and consultation between such representatives of *belles lettres* as G. W. C. and L., whose hand C. takes with no apparent consciousness that it is ungloved and black. S. B. D. loses his temper, gesticulates, threatens, bullies, rushes around like an angry steer, defies Chair and sergeant and mace and the Lord himself, if necessary, to rescue his friend from the ruin rapidly approaching. The scene is one of intrigue, bargaining, and purchasing. It is everywhere mouth to ear, with significant nods or shakes; here a pale group hoarsely discusses their chances, there the aged H. is whispering to a frowsy Senegambian, while mingling everywhere are whites, blacks, browns, and cinnamons, as happy in each other's companionship as young bears in cages at a menagerie. The gavel raps, raps, raps, raps. As well beat the air with a feather. Until the bargains are made and the treaty completed there can be no progress. At last the ballot is announced; Blaine, 375; Arthur, 274. No dark horse, no third. The plume is waving on high and the Arthurian reign is over.

"Then a scene discreditable and all but violent ensues. The field is up against the favourite. If a recess can be had such combinations may be made as will down the Knight, and it is a matter of indifference who is taken up. Away with them all. Only slay the man that the masses of the Republican party have in three successive conventions sought to nominate—for good or ill; who has had no patronage, no organization, no claims except such as great personality arouse, and who is at last apparently within easy reach, but still desperately distant from the greatest victory a Republican can achieve—the nomination for President of the United States. For half an hour all the spirits of noise, anger, disdain, frenzy, despair, are let loose.

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[1] Mr. Arthur was President in 1884

"When the storm is raging at its height, the Chair paralyzed, the thousands of guests screaming, yelling, no delegation seated, most of the people mounted on their chairs, and all vociferous; when all the resources of the machinery of the convention have been utterly exhausted, and nothing remains in behalf of peace or tranquillity, the smooth, kindly face and stalwart form of Stephen B. Elkins, Blaine's confidential manager, is seen over the edge of the platform. He waves a small, well-shaped hand gently for a moment, and lo! as if Canute had found the sea obedient, the Blaine men drop into their seats, wipe their brows and puff out their short breath to make room for easy breathing. The storm is over. M., acting with great tact for Blaine, acts on Elkins' diplomatic suggestion, and, with a brief and clear speech with a cheer in its final phrase, advises Blaine's friends to waive all technicalities, let the roll of States be called on the motion to take a recess, 'and,' he cried, with ascending pitch and swelling tone, rich with the sense of victory already achieved, 'and vote it down!'

"Vote it down they did, and in a trice, while the field remains demoralized, without generals or following, the third ballot is taken. The day is won. The stampede begins. The Logan column precipitates a full run into the Blaine camp. In another half hour the whole multitude is crazy with rapture, for the multitude was for Blaine, honestly and loyally all the time, and the scene which follows the formal declaration of his nomination with 520 votes was one of sheer ecstasy. Transparencies, one with a great rooster from Kansas, were paraded up and down the aisles. A great black eagle is borne up and down, and the rooster and the eagle have a crow together when they meet in the march, while all the time the air is full of shouting and the blatant band adds to the confusion, for that shouting mass would drown the howl of a forest. The ebb comes; adjournment is taken until evening.

"On reassembling the nomination of John A. Logan for second place on the ticket is found to be a foregone conclusion. A great many very bad speeches are made, and there is a shy and pensive disposition on the part of Massachusetts and New York to intimate that for one day they have really had to take a considerable quantity of acid diet; and if the convention of the great party of purity, progress, piety, principle, probity, property, etc., would at least give them a Vice-President who would be a little less objectionable than the President it had nominated they would be very much obliged for the small favour. With fan covering one eye and an eyeglass on the other, the dilettanti minority archly but sadly hints that Gresham or Lincoln would suit her better. But the party of the people, the party of poverty, the party of pluck, the party of patriotism, the party of philanthropy, the party of pensions, the party in which the peasant is the peer of the prince—delights in snubbing the pharisaic minority. When Mr. C. states pensively that New York wants time to make up her mind and count up her votes, a delegate calls out, 'Let her go home,' and nobody offers her any serious objection. She counts it up in due time; and, although with the solitary exception of a merely capricious vote for Fairchild, every other State and every Territory in the United States has cast its solid ballot for Black Jack, who will put into the campaign a terrific roar, New York has the impertinence to drop her courtesy in mock deference, draw her ample skirts aside and go out of the convention, leaving her compliments, to a slight extent, for Gresham and Lincoln. Then the nomination of Logan goes through with a whoop, and the work is done.

. . . .

"'Lord! What fools these mortals be.' Yet Puck was never at a political convention. Is there something in the atmosphere of such a place that robs reason of her faculty and transforms humans into some other species?

"Look at that man who has taken off his coat on the announcement of the ballot nominating Blaine. He is standing in the very blaze of the hot afternoon sun streaming through the windows. He has tied a red silk handkerchief around the top of his umbrella and secured his hand to the handle; and there he is, waving the ridiculous and meaningless combination with all the muscular power he possesses. He never exercised half as much energy in any useful cause. That woman has fastened her blue veil on the top of her husband's walking-stick, and, having mounted her chair, is bobbing it up in air and bringing it down spirally, and doing this for five or ten minutes without consciousness of its absurdity, although it may not be clear to her that she is thus promoting the election of James G. Blaine, for she evidently forgets that all women are in the condition of the Territories who were so enthusiastic for Blaine four years ago, and had their young zeal snubbed by the sarcastic Roscoe [Conkling], who reminded them that 'They have no votes.' The woman near by, who is old enough to know better, is singing the 'Sweet by and by,' and alternating it with 'Jerusalem's my happy home.' The boy is pounding the floor with a piece of scantling he has broken off a partition. The other boy has a bird whistle, and is running opposition to the steam tugs that seem to have heard Blaine is nominated, and seem to know that Logan is going to be, and, recognizing kindred accomplishments, have already begun the celebration.

"Those men are tearing down the state shields, and are going to fasten them on their swelling bosom and march up and down the aisles; there they go. These men are engaged on a wager to see how high they can throw their hats. That young lady is crying real tears because Blaine is nominated, and for her sweet life she does not know what interest she has in the nomination, anyhow. In fact, it seems to be the non-voters that constitute the muscle and sinew of the campaign racketry—a word made indispensable by political conventions. All the time that we have been observing these trifles 10,000 sane persons have been continuously howling, shrieking, singing, snorting, clapping their hands, stamping their feet, waving their hats, waving their bonnets by their long strings, dancing in the irregular, accented way peculiar to savages and semi-civilized communities, and they appear to think that all this is a demonstration in support of our free institutions. Now a few thousand people cry 'Sdown, sdown!' which undoubtedly means 'sit down,' but that only makes the rest crazier. The hoot goes up in pitch, thickens in volume, and the familiar tiger is introduced. The 'hi, hi!' which is exasperating in the extreme except to devotees of Wagner, who naturally admire irregular musical forms, is also introduced, and is taken up and repeated like small chain-lightning from east to west on a summer evening. Here is a man who cannot 'Hi, hi!' So he forms his lips into an O, and utters a monotone 'Coo, coo,' as if he thinks he is a mechanical cuckoo in a Swiss clock. There are at least a hundred dismal black umbrellas open and waving; yet we are under roof, and there is not a drop of rain. One umbrella has just turned inside out and performed hari-kari upon its own poor ribs, instead of, for justice's sake, upon those of its proprietor. The fat woman has lifted the little girl on the shoulders of a slim young man, and the child has put her hands together, and is saying, in a high, shrill key, 'God bless James G. Blaine; God bless James G. Blaine,' and we all wonder what for.

"Now a floral helmet, with a beautiful snowy plume of the finest imported horse-hair, is produced at the Chairman's desk, and the whole house goes simply wild. It is a happy thought, that it is.

. . . .

"Now the din has grown perfectly infernal, just because somebody tried to stop it; and Good gracious, sir, will you kindly omit to knock a fellow's head off with your boot-jack? That's what he brought to support our free institutions. He was 'shinin' 'em up' out in the street, and has climbed in through a window, and is now waving that deadly weapon over his head as if it were the banner Excelsior carried up the Alps. All this racketry has been going by the watch for seven minutes, for a week by one's lacerated ears; and all because James G. Blaine is nominated for President. At this moment there is not the slightest indication that it will ever stop.

"But it is nothing to the racket there will be all over the United States before he is elected President.

. . . .

Comments on the Convention

"The distinguishing feature of the campaign for President is the effort of the office-holding element to secure delegates. As first shown in this paper, more than 100 holders of Federal positions from the Southern States alone appear in convention, all for Arthur. The majority of the non-office-holding delegates from the same States are selected only by sufferance of the former, who are the leaders and bosses of Republican politics. The influence of office holding appears strong in the Administration's behalf in the North also, and it may safely be said that but for this agency, directly and indirectly, 200 of the 276 recorded for Mr. Arthur on the first ballot would have been added to the columns of other candidates.

"The immediate advisers of the President were not idle either. The work of Mr. Secretary Chandler shows up well in New Hampshire, the sole Republican State giving Arthur a majority of her votes yesterday. Mr. Commissioner Evans did his best in Kentucky. Assistant Postmaster-General Hatton worked hard though fruitlessly in Iowa. Postmaster-General Gresham himself was alert and early in Indiana, where, by smart tactics, ten Arthur delegates were secured, despite an absence of popular feeling in favour of the President's nomination.

"The reformers, independents, and conservatives of New England and New York rally about Edmunds. They gather some delegates for him, achieve a strategic victory at Utica, and then attack Mr. Blaine's reputation with an old charge. The son of never-satisfied Ohio plans a shrewd and not over-frank and creditable campaign, the while proclaiming himself not a candidate, managing at length to secure a bare majority of the delegates from his State.

"The various forces arrive at Chicago. It is soon discovered that the news we had received of Blaine's great strength with the Republican people, wherever there are Republican majorities, was trustworthy. Despite the office-holders, the conservatives, Logan and Sherman, it is seen Blaine is ahead of any rival. With his delegates come not only the old-time enthusiasm, determination, and intensity of popular feeling at home, but politicians, shrewd, tireless, and experienced, which are new and welcome features in Blaine's convention management. They pull their coats. The field is worked row by row and hill by hill. It is apparent from the first that Blaine will win, barring accident. Only the blind, stupid, or indifferent could fail to see it. With such strength from the people and such an array of political sagacity to handle it, defeat would have been disgraceful.

"The Administration stands with its feet upon the South, reaching imploringly toward the North. Into the South, quick and sure, goes Elkins. Rather into the South had he gone two months ago by a well-kept secret conspiracy with Powell Clayton and Kerrens and Roots and others of Arkansas. This State comes to Chicago solid for Arthur. At the proper moment its nearly complete desertion to Blaine is announced. Arthur's foundation crumbles under his feet, and there is consternation among his followers. Man by man, by a hundred influences, some of them doubtless questionable, the Blaine operators break the lines of the Administration's solid South. It is the beginning of the practical triumph already seen to be logical.

"But a slight reverse comes. Powell Clayton, who arranged the Arkansas defection, is selected by the national committee for temporary chairman. He is a man of objectionable record. It is given out the chairmanship is his reward by the Blaine people for his treachery to Arthur. He is set up as Blaine's man. The opposition, quickly welded by opportunity, plans a sudden blow. It is delivered, and Blaine's man falls. It is hailed as an anti-Blaine triumph.

"Too late was it discovered that the selection of Clayton was an Arthur trap into which Blaine fell. The national committee was not a Blaine committee, and Clayton was first named by an Arthur man, Arthur members voting for him. The child was of course immediately said to belong to the Blaine managers, and they could not deny it without mortally offending Clayton. They fattened it and stood by it.

"Encouraged by its first tactical victory, the opposition makes renewed efforts. It has of necessity become a fight of the field against the favourite. It quickly degenerates into 'anything to beat Blaine.' It is eager, bitter, and peculiar. Dudes and roughs, civil service reformers and office-holding bosses, short-hairs and college presidents—many men of various kinds of ambition or selfishness join in midnight conferences, cartoon circulation, or desperate parliamentary tactics. The first noticeable effect of the alliance to drag down the leader is a solidification of all his forces. The wavering become firm, the indifferent determined. Like an old guard they rally round their leader.

"The opposition flounders and struggles to make something of itself. It agrees to keep the prize from Blaine if possible, but it cannot agree that any other man shall have it. Harmony in spoils-hunting becomes discord in spoils-dividing. Logan refuses all combination. The Lincoln boom collapses. The General Sherman scheme fails. To throw Arthur to Edmunds is impossible. To transfer Edmunds to Arthur is merely to send Logan and Sherman to Blaine. Logan will not have Edmunds; the Edmunds men do not want Logan. Arthur also prefers Blaine to Sherman. Gresham is looked upon as Arthur's man.

"Seeking but not finding the man with whom to beat Blaine, the opposition fights for time. It desperately contends for postponement of the inevitable. The end comes, as had been expected, and precisely as foreshadowed in these columns. Blaine's naked starting strength is about 360, but by prudent and skilful handling of individual delegates his managers poll only 334 on the first ballot. Their reserve strength does the business. The gain of fifteen votes from first ballot to second is the signal for the break. But so tenacious are the allies that a recess is demanded. Hardly fair play, even in the dubious game of politics. Intense feeling springs up. We have the singular spectacle of a mob of gentlemen. There is great danger that the convention will end in a row, and the nomination, if made, become a doubtful honour. One clear-headed man sees this danger, by timely word and commanding presence averts it, and on roll-call a recess is refused. The next ballot makes Blaine—Ohio starting the break, Illinois finishing it. Logan consents to take second place, and so Foraker's name is not presented by Ohio. The convention shouts for the ticket and adjourns, wondering how many New Yorkers will join in bolting it."

They did well to wonder, for it was the bolters of New York that turned the scale against the Republican candidate in the election.

NOTE TO CHAPTER LXXXIX

REMARKS BY MR. DENIS KEARNEY ON "KEARNEYISM IN CALIFORNIA"

While the sheets of the second half of this volume were passing through the press, I received a letter from Mr. Denis Kearney, making remarks on some of the statements contained in the chapter entitled "Kearneyism in California." This letter is unfortunately too long to be inserted as a whole; and time does not permit me to communicate with my Californian informants and re-investigate all the matters to which Mr. Kearney refers. I have, however, in a few passages slightly modified the text of the former edition; and where I did not feel in a position to do this, I have made such extracts from the letter as seemed sufficient to let Mr. Kearney's view of the facts, and of his own conduct, be fairly and fully set forth. As he responded to my invitation to state his case, made in reply to a letter of remonstrance from him, I am anxious that all the justice I can do him should be done.

After disputing the authority (which, however, does not seem to me to be affected by his strictures) of the Californian gentleman who had revised and corrected the chapter in question, Mr. Kearney's letter proceeds as follows:

> "After the adoption of the new constitution and the passage of the Anti-Chinese Restriction Bills of 1879 and 1882 California began to move, and she is still a booming. Chinese immigration is excluded. There are a few smuggled in over the borders of British Columbia on the north and Mexico on the south. I spent the winter of 1887-8 in New York and Washington agitating for the total exclusion of the Chinese, which resulted in the Scott Exclusion Act of 1888. My next fight will be to get Canada to pass an Anti-Chinese Exclusion Law. At present she is being made the dumping ground for Asiatic pests who are afterwards smuggled into our country. This, my dear sir, must not be considered a voice from the tomb. I am a young man just turning 43,—chock full of vitality, and a great deal of experience: while I may not be able to set the world afire, I am in hopes of living long enough to see the Asiatic hordes excluded from this continent from Cape Horn to Icy Cape. As you suggested[1] I have in the following disputed certain passages, trusting you will do me the justice either to modify the same or add a note in the new edition stating that I dispute," etc.
>
> "Yours very respectfully,
>
> "DENIS KEARNEY.

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[1] In a letter written in reply to a former letter from Mr. Kearney

"Pages 390-391. In September 1877, immediately after the general state, municipal, and congressional elections, I called a meeting of working men and others to discuss publicly the propriety of permanently organizing for the purpose of holding the politicians up to the pledges made to the people before election. . . . I made up my mind that if our civilization—California civilization—was to continue, Chinese immigration must be stopped, and I saw in the people the power to enforce that 'must.' Hence the meeting. This meeting resolved itself into a permanent organization, and 'resoluted' in favour of a 'red-hot' agitation. I was, in spite of my earnest protests, elected President of this new organization, with instructions from the meeting to 'push the organization' throughout the city and State without delay. Our aim was to press Congress to take action against the Chinese at its next sitting. . . . I did not sympathise with the July meeting of 1877, which was called to express sympathy with the men on strike in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. I am opposed to strikes in a Republic, where the ballot of a millionaire's gardener or coachman cancels that of their master. A strike amid such conditions is a brutal way of settling a difficulty. Pitting an empty belly and no bank account against a full belly and a plethoric bank book brings it down to a question of 'bellys.' It does not require a very great scientist to tell us which gives out first. I wanted to tell our people to strike at the 'ballot box,' to do which they must be organized, etc. . . . The part that I took in the municipal election, mentioned in page 391, was brought about in this way. I owned a prosperous draying business, and was an influential member of the Draymen's Union. The streets of our city were in a horrible condition, almost impassable, making it very difficult for teams to haul any kind of a load to and from the distributing centres. The money appropriated for their repair by the taxpayers was squandered by the men elected to see that it was honestly spent. The Draymen's Union, for self-protection, went into municipal politics and demanded that we be given the superintendent of streets.

"Page 392.—True I am not one of the literati, that is to say, a professor of degrees and master of languages, although I can speak more than one. For more than thirty years I have been a great reader and close student of men and measures. No *Chronicle* reporter ever wrote or dressed up a speech for me. They did the reverse; always made it a point to garble and misrepresent. It was only when the *Chronicle* saw where it could make a hit that it spread out a speech. To illustrate, if I attacked a monopoly whose rottenness the *Chronicle* shielded for money, it then would garble and misrepresent that speech; but if I attacked an institution the *Chronicle* wanted to blackmail, the speech would be given in full once or twice, or they would keep it up until 'seen.'

"Page 392.—(Meeting on Nob Hill.)

"I did not use any such language as is imputed to me. Nob Hill is the centre of the Sixth Ward, and I advertised for the meeting there to organize the Sixth Ward Club. We had bonfires at all our meetings so as to direct the people where to go. . . . No such construction could have been put upon the language used in my speech of that evening. The police authorities had shorthand reporters specially detailed to take down my speeches verbatim. . . . I was not arrested on account of the Nob Hill meeting. I cannot now tell without looking up the matter how many times I was arrested. At last the authorities, finding their efforts to break up the movement of no avail, decided to proclaim the meetings *à la* Balfour in Ireland. Upon the heels of the proclamation to stop our meetings came another from the Governor calling for an election to fill a vacancy in the legislature in the aristocratic district of Alameda. Taking advantage of the situation, I went into the district, organized and carried it against a combination of both Democrats and Republicans. This gave us a standing in the field of politics, and frightened the authorities, who then and there withdrew opposition to the new movement.

"Page 396.—Shortly after the election of the delegates I made a tour of the United States, speaking everywhere to immense audiences and urging that they petition Congress to stop Chinese immigration. . . . My trip was a brilliant success. In less than a year I had succeeded in lifting the Chinese from a local to a great national question. This also disputes the statement on p. 401 that my trip East was a failure.

"Page 401.—('Since 1880 he has played no part in Californian politics.')

"This is true to this extent. I stopped agitating after having shown the people their immense power, and how it could be used. The Chinese question was also in a fair way of being solved. The plains of this state were strewn with the festering carcasses of public robbers. I was poor, with a helpless family, and I went to work to provide for their comfort. Common sense would suggest that if I sought office, or the emoluments of office, I could easily have formed combinations to be elected either governor of my State or United States senator.

"Page 395 ('hoodlums and other ragamuffins who formed the first Sand Lot meetings.')

"It was only when the city authorities, who while persecuting us, either hired all of the halls or frightened their owners or lessees into not allowing us to hire them, that we were driven to the Sand Lots. At these early meetings we sometimes had to raise from $500 to $1000 to carry on the agitation inside and outside the courts. If, then, the audiences were composed of hoodlums and ragamuffins, how could we have raised so much money at a single meeting?

"Page 400.—I also dispute some of the statements therein. All of the bills of the first session of the Legislature under the new constitution were declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court on account of the little scheming jokers tucked away in them. The Anti-Chinese Bills that were passed,—and all introduced were passed,—were declared by the Federal judges as in conflict with the United States Constitution. I advocated the adoption of the new Constitution, and delivered one hundred and thirty speeches in that campaign. The San Francisco papers sent correspondents with me. The very prominence of the questions threw me into the *foreground*, so that I had to stand the brunt of the battle, and came very near being assassinated for my pains. Against me were all the newspapers and speakers, including Mr. Henry George. An immense corruption fund was raised to defeat it, so that our opponents had flooded the State with speakers: only a few were on our side. This kept me on the jump day and night. I doubt very much if you, sir, could have worked up a new speech every day, and kept it up for ten weeks. This I had to do.

"Page 402 ('Kearney throve because the solid classes despised him'). I don't quite understand what you mean by the 'solid classes.' The money-lenders, land monopolists, and those who were growing rich by importing and employing Chinese labourers were against me, and did all in their power to kill both the movement and myself. . . . My only crime seems to have been that I opposed the Mongolization of my State in the interest of our own people and their civilization. I never received a dollar from public office or private parties for my services. They were gratuitous, and have secured me, I am sure, the esteem of the majority of my fellow-citizens, among whom I am still not without influence."

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